

A Report on the Experiences and Meanings of Forest Campers in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area

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by

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Developed forest camping has received little attention in the recreation research since the late 1960s and early 1970s. Changes in socio-demographics, technology, and the public's expectations for amenities over the past forty years suggested that the nature of the developed camping experience may have changed. Thus, the purpose of this study was to understand the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings, and the influence of technology on developed forest camping. In-depth interviews were conducted in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area with thirty-eight camping groups in three campgrounds which varied in their level of development. Campers also differed in their style of camping (i.e., tent, pop-up camper, pull-behind trailer, or motor home).

Developed forest camping experiences were described by participants as a combination of what they were doing (i.e., activities), who they were interacting with (i.e., social interaction), where they were camping (i.e., setting), and what they were feeling while they were there (i.e., psychological states/feelings). The camping experience occurred in stages and it emerged over the course of participants' trips, with emotional highs and lows. Camping was a social experience, with participants defining much of their experience in terms of who they were with. The developed camping experience was influenced by the natural environment, particularly scenic beauty and other aesthetic setting qualities.

The majority of participants in this study suggested that they were able to get a nature-based experience even in highly developed camp settings in which large motor homes, televisions, and satellite dishes were common. Participants used a range of camping gear and electronics, and this technology was important to promote comfort and conveniences and for a distraction during inclement weather.

The associated meanings of developed forest camping were restoration (i.e., rest, escape, and recovery), family functioning, special places, self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God and nature, novelty, and the opportunity for children to learn. Restoration was the most commonly expressed meaning across less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed campgrounds. The most commonly expressed life-context meanings were restoration and sharing positive family memories and stories. These family memories and stories often developed into important camping traditions.

Several recommendations for recreation managers are identified and discussed.

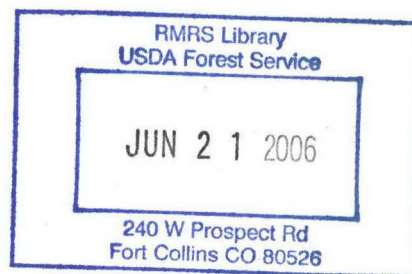


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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and the meanings that recreationists associated with modern developed forest camping. Camping in America began as a recreational pursuit almost 200 years ago (Cordell, Betz, Bowker, English, Mou, Bergstrom, Teasley, Tarrant, & Loomis, 1999), and it has evolved into an important recreational activity and a common way that Americans spend time in the outdoors. As opposed to dispersed or primitive camping, this study explored developed forest camping, which was defined as a recreational activity in which a person spends at least one night outdoors in a designated, managed setting using one of a variety of motor-based camping modes, including car camping with a tent, pop-up camper, trailer, motor home, or other recreational vehicle.

Public participation in developed camping has increased significantly from the 1960's to the present time. The number of campers in the 1960's was estimated to have been about thirteen million people ages 12 and older. The 2000 National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) found that 83.1 million Americans 16 years of age or older went camping at least once the previous year (United States Forest Service, 2000). This represents over one-fourth (i.e., 27%) of the U.S. population of this age according to the 2000 Census. With 701 million visitor days, camping is the eighth most popular outdoor recreation activity in America (Cordell et al., 1999). But camping is important for reasons other than its popularity. Camping is one of the primary ways that many Americans interact with nature. For these recreationists, camping may be one of the only ways that they experience an extended stay in the outdoors. Thus a study of camping may help us to better understand the American relationship to nature.

Developed Forest Camping in the 21st Century

Although multiple studies of developed forest camping were conducted in the 1960's and 1970's by researchers such as Burch (1965), Hendee and Campbell (1969), Bultena and Klessig (1965), King, (1965, 1966), Burch and Wenger (1967), Cordell and Kykes (1969) and Lapage and Ragain (1974), few studies have examined camping in the 1980s and 1990s. Although specific research about the nature of the modern developed forest camping experience is sparse, comparisons of camping in the 1960's and 1970's with modern camping suggests that the nature of developed forest camping has changed considerably over the past forty years. Many of these changes reflect the influence of the modern American consumer culture.

First, the socio-demographics of developed campers have changed (Cordell et al., 1999). In the 1960's, most camping occurred in developed campgrounds designed to accommodate families who were tent camping. Camping was essentially an inexpensive accommodation for families who were sightseeing or on vacation (ORRRC, 1962). Early researchers such as King (1965) and Burch and Wenger (1967), who studied camping in developed settings, found that family groups with children were the primary users of the campgrounds and that camping was an important part of summer family life. More than thirty years later, Cordell and his associates (1999) found that modern developed campers tended to be retirees camping in expensive motor homes, traveling non-married individuals sixteen to forty-five years old who were using camping as an inexpensive lodging option, or groups of recreationists using camping to gain greater access to such specialized activities as climbing and canoeing. As socio-demographics of campers have changed, the social meanings associated with camping may also have changed.

Second, technological advancements are likely influencing the modern developed camping experience. Synthetic materials such as polypropylene, fleece, kevlar, scotch-lite, capilene, lycra, cordura, velcro, mylar and Gore-Tex often have replaced natural fabrics such as goose-down, wool, and cotton in many types of clothing, tents, and sleeping bags (Tilin & Grudowski, 1997). Advancements in outdoor equipment such as weather-resistant tents, portable cook-stoves, internal frame backpacks, self-inflating pads, bivouac sacks, collapsible water bladders, solar-heated showers, and a wide range of recreational vehicles have made camping much more comfortable today than it was twenty years ago (Cordell, 1999; Gorman, 1998). Publications such as *Backpacker* and *Outside* magazines devote entire issues to the identification and selection of high-quality camping gear, and the Internet now provides developed campers with instant access to camping products.

Modern developed campers are also utilizing a wide variety of electronic technologies for communication and entertainment. Two-way radios and cellular phones, which have been designed to be small, compact, and water-resistant, are increasingly common among developed campers. Televisions and VCR or DVD players have become standard camping equipment for many developed campers, and as manufacturers make these devices smaller and more portable, they become increasingly attractive. Satellite dishes are commonplace in the modern developed campground where campers often scramble to find a campsite with good reception. The *Washington Post* recently (Cho, 2004) reported on a campground in Fairfax County, Virginia that introduced wireless Internet access. The increasing use of electronic technology in camping suggests that campers today may be more interested in being passively entertained during

their camping experiences rather than engaging in a more active recreational camping experiencing. The use of this technology also suggests the importance of staying connected to technologies that have seemingly become inseparable from day-to-day living.

Taken together, the technological advancements in camping products and the increasing use of electronics during camping experiences may be insulating campers from nature. Thus, the relationship between campers and nature may be changing because of the influences of technology and the American consumer culture. As campers purchase and use more and more products, the meanings associated with the modern developed camping experience may be found less in the outdoor places where people camp and more on the gadgets and gear that developed campers bring with them.

With the commerce surrounding modern developed camping, it comes as no surprise that campers today are spending a significant amount of money on their camping trips. For example, Shafer conducted a study in 1969 of 1,140 family camping groups and found that the average group spent approximately \$50-70 on each camping trip, which included campground fees, food, entertainment, gas, and other miscellaneous supplies. Today, with modern fee programs, gasoline prices, food prices, and an assortment of entertainment opportunities, camping groups may spend between \$200-300 per camping trip. In 1996 alone, Americans spent almost \$300 million on basic camping equipment (e.g., stoves, flashlights, camp furniture, cookware, camp food, coolers, and water purification systems) (KMPG Peat Marwick, 1997), and hundreds of millions more on other camping-related items such as footwear, apparel, outdoor accessories, tents, packs, and sleeping bags (KMPG Peat Marwick, 1997).

Modern developed campers appear to have a different set of expectations for campgrounds and their management. The trend among public-managed campgrounds is moving away from rustic campgrounds to camping facilities that provide a range of amenities and services. Cordell and his associates (1999) described how developed campers are now able to choose from (a) full hook-ups with water, sewer, and electricity, (b) water and electricity, (c) electricity only, and (d) no hookups. From 1977-1996 the public sector almost tripled its number of "improved" campgrounds with 40,000 additional water and electric campsites (Cordell et al., 1999). Developed campgrounds in national forests have evolved to include "single family," "single family premium," "multi family," and "group" campsites.

This trend towards additional camping amenities and services has influenced campground management. Many Forest Service campgrounds are now managed by concessionaires. Rather than viewing campers as visitors, concessionaires use for-profit business models and treat campers as customers. Campground managers make different choices and different decisions when they manage for profits and consumption, and these decisions increasingly favor the provision of specific amenities to enhance camper comfort and convenience. As Tim Eling, Recreation Specialist at the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, explained, "The Forest Service is becoming more of a business. The bottom dollar is more important now than it was thirty years ago...visitors are saying, 'we want more hook-ups and we want more paving'" (personal communication, January 7, 2003). As campers continue to choose developed campgrounds with more amenities over developed campgrounds with fewer amenities,

the most rustic and nature-based developed camping opportunities may become a thing of the past.

In summary, developed forest camping appears to have changed over the past forty years because of the influence of social, technological, commercial, and managerial factors. Therefore, the nature of the developed forest camping experience and the ways in which camping is viewed as meaningful may have also changed. Resource managers and agency administrators serve a public that is losing opportunities for nature-based and forest-based experiences. The ability of agency administrators to gain scarce public financial and human resources to develop and sustain the developed forested camping infrastructure, and the ability of resource managers to provide the necessary amenities and to develop appropriate regulations, require an understanding of the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings.

Limitations of Past Camping Research

In the late 1950's, 1960's, and into the early 1970's, most outdoor recreation research focused on recreation as an *activity* (Heywood, Christensen, & Stankey, 1991), such as studies of campground use (King, 1966; LaPage, 1967; Lime, 1971; Wagar, 1964) and camping participation (Burch & Wenger, 1967; King, 1965; LaPage & Ragain, 1974). However, this 'activity' approach was deficient because it failed to consider the totality of the recreation experience, which can be influenced by many factors in addition to what recreationists are actually doing.

In the early 1970's, recreation researchers conceptualized a second approach to recreation that included settings, experiences, and outcomes of recreation engagements (Driver & Tocher, 1970). Activities and settings were redefined as the inputs or "means

to an end” with the outputs being a recreation ‘experience’—a psychological outcome associated with participation in a given activity in a particular setting (Driver & Brown, 1978; Clark & Stankey, 1979). According to this approach, the recreation experience was seen as dependent upon the relationship between the activity and setting. This advancement in the conceptualization of recreation led to the development of the *Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Planning System*, a recreation management framework based upon settings and experiences (Driver, Brown, Stankey, & Gregoire, 1987). A weakness of the setting/experience approach was that it was dominated by a psychological perspective that viewed recreation as goal-directed behavior (Stewart, 1998). By viewing recreation behavior as goal directed, researchers overlooked the fact that many experiences during recreation may be emergent and unexpected (Patterson, 2002). Also, the approach diminished the role that campers and camping social groups may play in constructing the camping experience and giving it meaning within the context of their lives.

A third approach developed in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s focused on the social aspects of outdoor recreation (Burch, 1965, 1971; Etzkorn, 1964; Hendee & Campbell, 1969; Lee, 1972). Researchers examined the relationship between camping and socio-cultural variables (Burch & Wenger, 1967; Shafer, 1969) and compared the social behavior of campers at developed versus primitive campgrounds. Hendee and Harris (1970) observed that most developed campgrounds reflected complex social systems that involved social interactions among several groups. Researchers also explored why people went camping and what people valued about their camping experiences. Etzkorn (1964) found that campers valued the social resources that were

available during camping more so than the resources available through the natural environment. Clark, Hendee, and Campbell (1969) suggested that a new camping style was emerging—one with “associated behavioral expectations less dependent on direct environmental contact, more compatible with highly developed structures, and increasingly social conditions” (p. 145).

The social camping research suggested that developed campers were constructing their own nature-based experience through social interaction (Lee, 1972). As Burch (1971) described, “natural phenomena are sociocultural phenomena in the sense that they are constructed through social interactions among members of a culture” (p. 9). In a study of recreation behavior using observations and surveys in three developed campgrounds, Hendee and Campbell (1969) found that campers were more concerned about socialization during camping than they were about the natural setting, and that the social characteristics of developed campground attracted recreationists. In fact, Hendee and Campbell observed that only a small percentage of campers’ time was spent in a specific outdoor recreation activity, and that many of the rewards of participating in camping could be found in the “collective activities and interaction of the camping group” (p. 15). Although the social approach to understanding the developed camping experiences lessened the importance of physical and setting characteristics and emphasized the importance of the social context, this research did not consider how camping meaning develops and how people view camping as meaningful within the context of their lives.

Thus, while the activity, setting/experience, and social approaches can tell us something about why people go camping, what they do while camping, what experiences

they receive while camping, and sometimes what they value while they are camping, they do not fully explore how people come to understand their camping experiences as meaningful. The problem is that a paucity of research exists regarding the nature and meanings of developed forest camping experiences since the 1960s and 1970s. Although several recent studies have examined the meanings associated with recreation experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993; Buchanan, Christensen, & Burdge, 1981; Frederickson & Anderson, 1999; McIntyre, 1989; Patterson, Watson, Williams, & Roggenbuck, 1998; Riese & Vorkinn, 2002; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002), only three have explored the meanings of camping (McIntyre, 1989; Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002). Too often researchers have relied upon early studies of camping because modern studies did not exist. For example, a recent study by Warsecha, Manning, Lime, and Freimund (2001) about diversity in outdoor recreation used the results of camping studies from 1966-1973 to be indicative of the diversity of the modern camping experience. Because developed camping as a recreational experience evolved over the past forty years, modern developed camping research is needed.

Over the past ten years, recreation researchers have emphasized the human rather than the ecological dimensions of camping in studies of recreation specialization among campers (McIntyre & Pigram, 1992), how recreationists experience camping through narratives (Patterson, Williams, and Scherl, 1994), and the social meanings of camping (Field, 2000). The study reported here is situated among recent studies of the human dimensions of outdoor recreation and camping, while being informed and historically grounded by earlier studies which recognized that the social setting and even activities can be an important aspect of developed forest camping. This study adds to the growing

body of knowledge related to emergent recreation experiences and meanings and to the number of studies that are utilizing constructivist, meaning-based approaches for understanding nature-based recreation.

Research Questions

Recognizing that socio-cultural, technological, and consumer-driven changes may have altered the nature of forest camping over the past forty years, the purpose of this study was to understand the modern developed forest camping experience and associated meanings. The primary research questions in this study were:

1. What are the most salient elements of developed forest camping experiences?
2. How does technology influence developed forest camping experiences?
3. What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping experiences and how are meanings constructed?
4. What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping across the greater context of their lives?

To provide additional information to the USDA Forest Service and to the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area management, an additional question was asked regarding perceptions of, and recommendations for, campground management.

METHODS

Research Approach

This study explored developed forest camping using a constructivist approach. Constructivism suggests that camping experiences and meanings can be understood as personally, socially, or experientially constructed and can be shared among individuals (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This study was informed by the following assumptions. Individuals and groups socially construct reality. Shared experiences, language, and meanings create a basis for knowledge and understanding. In other words, an individual's beliefs, prior experience, knowledge, interactions with others, and culture influence how he or she perceives the world. Therefore, reality is a cultural construct. Although reality may exist outside of human perception and social construction, what we actually come to know of reality is culturally dependent. There can be multiple realities, and these realities are believed to be equally valid.

The main idea behind constructivism is that in many cases perception becomes reality. When something changes that causes past "realities" to be changed or questioned, people go through the same process of interpreting and negotiating meanings through social interaction so that new meanings are created. This process of meaning-making continually shapes how people view their world. Although there can be a range of meanings related to a specific experience, some meanings are more shared than others.

Due to the constructed nature of camping experiences, the constructivist approach seemed ideally suited to this research. Developed forest camping meanings emerge as people participate in the activities of camping (both alone and with others), but in

addition, camping meanings evolve through communication and interpretation of these activities within the context of campers' lives and in association with their social group. Finally, through these social interaction processes, shared meanings about the camping experience emerge and may eventually become a widely recognized and communicated "meaning" of the developed forest camping experience.

Study Site

Data were collected at campgrounds within the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (MRNRA). The MRNRA, a part of the Jefferson and George Washington National Forests in Southwest Virginia, covers over 120,000 acres of high mountain lands and is managed by the USDA Forest Service.

Three road-accessible campgrounds were selected based upon the types of amenities provided. Ravens Cliff Campground was identified as less-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, a hand-pump station for water, no paved roads, and no other amenities). Hurricane Campground was identified as moderately-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, running water, electricity, showers, paved road, and no other amenities). Grindstone Campground was identified as highly-developed (i.e., tent pad, fire pit, running water, water hook-ups, sewage hookups, electricity, showers, playground, areas for satellite reception, paved roads, and other amenities like children's programming).

Sample

In this study, the target population was developed forest campers who camped in car-accessible campgrounds in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. As is common in qualitative research programs, this study explored a subset of the target population to provide a holistic understanding of the modern forest camping experience

and associated meanings. Stratified purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to identify forty-two "camping groups" (defined as one or more campers in a specific camp site) from three different types of campgrounds (i.e., less developed, moderately developed, and highly developed) in the MRNRA who were participating in a multi-day (i.e., 2-7 days) camping trip.

Building Communication and Rapport with Campers

To decrease the potential for negative responses (e.g., surprise, fear, anger) from campers associated with being approached by a stranger at their campsite during their camping trip, it was important to inform campers of the study and that they might be approached by a Virginia Tech graduate student sometime during their camping trip. Three strategies were identified for communicating the study to forest campers. First, a sign was posted at the campground entrance station at Hurricane and Grindstone informing campers of the study. A sign was also posted at Ravens Cliff on the bulletin board near the campground fee box. The sign explained to campers that Virginia Tech was conducting a study of forest camping in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and that their group may be approached for voluntary participation. Second, a brief informational flyer was created and distributed to campers when they registered at Hurricane and Grindstone. This flyer read,

The Virginia Tech Department of Forestry, in cooperation with the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area, is conducting a study of campers during the summer of 2003. As part of this study, you may be approached at your campsite and asked to participate in an interview about your camping experiences. Although your participation is voluntary, we appreciate your

support of this research which will help us to better understand camping at Mount Rogers, and will aid in making decisions regarding future services within the National Recreation Area.

At Ravens Cliff, there was no way to distribute a flyer to each camper and therefore flyers were not used. Third, campground hosts in Hurricane and Grindstone verbally informed campers that Virginia Tech was conducting a study of forest camping and that their group may be approached for voluntary participation in discussions about their camping experiences. At Ravens Cliff, this approach was not possible because there was no on-site host.

The researcher also used a non-threatening approach when entering a campsite. He always entered a campsite using a main road or trail. He smiled and entered each campsite slowly. He requested permission to enter campers' campsites by stating, "Do you mind if I come into your campsite to ask you a question?" Only if the campers agreed to allow him to enter their campsite did he then explain that he was a graduate student from Virginia Tech and that he wanted to talk with them about their camping experiences. They were then asked if they would be willing to complete a consent form and to participate in an interview about their camping experience.

The researcher assured campers of confidentiality. Not only was this required by the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board for studies that involve human subjects, but it was also appropriate practice in field research. As Punch (1994) suggested, "The major safeguard to place against the invasion of privacy is the assurance of confidentiality" (p. 92). In this study, campers were told that their names would not be used in any reports and that names would be changed when necessary. These strategies helped the

participants in this study to feel more comfortable with the process of participating in interviews about their camping experiences and the meanings that they associated with camping.

Data Collection

Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with forest campers on-site at the end of their visit. Interviews were flexible and variable to accommodate the way that participants understood, described, and talked about their forest camping experiences and meanings. General questions were used to evoke participants to share narratives or stories about their camping trip, and expressions about experiences and meanings were probed more deeply. In situations in which participants did not respond well to general questions, an interview guide was used to elicit additional information. An incentive (i.e., Nalgene water bottle) was given to each camping group that completed an interview. All interviews were audio-taped.

Demographic Survey

Demographic information was collected using a brief survey distributed at the same time as the informed consent form. This survey included questions related to age, mailed address, email address, age range, gender, race, and years of experience with developed forest camping.

Data Analysis

Qualitative analysis of interviews involved induction—the process of discovering patterns, themes, and categories in the data (Patton, 2002). Data analysis did not seek to predict developed forest camping experiences, but rather to make them understandable in

ways that might be managerially relevant through an in-depth, rich understanding of a specific group of people who were experiencing recreation at a specific time in a specific place (Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994).

A constructivist approach (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) with content analysis (Patton, 2002) and grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) procedures was used to analyze the transcribed interviews. In a broad sense, the term content analysis refers to the processes of reduction and sense-making applied to qualitative data to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002). Grounded theory has three basic steps: description, conceptual ordering, and theorizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1994).

In the first step of basic description, the interviews were read and re-read to develop a general understanding of participants' responses and their expressions about their forest camping experiences and associated meanings. In the second step of conceptual ordering, data were manually fractured based upon similarities and then the fractured data were conceptually grouped into salient categories (i.e., coding) that seemed to capture the expressions of each individual campers' experiences and associated meanings (i.e., idiographic analysis). With these categories in hand, the data were again read and re-read in an effort to identify meaningful themes across individual campers and camping groups (i.e., nomothetic analysis). The process of reading and re-reading led to the development of new themes, the revision of existing themes, or the collapse or subdivision of existing themes. "Sensitizing concepts" (Patton, 2002), which are relevant concepts from recreation, leisure, and environmental psychology literature, were introduced during this step. Sensitizing concepts (e.g., "restoration" and "family functioning") served as a reference point for identifying relationships among themes.

Trustworthiness Procedures

In this study, “trustworthiness” procedures were used to validate the results of data analysis (Patton, 2002). These procedures included (a) reflective listening during the interviews, (b) the use of systematic data analysis procedures, (c) the identification of ‘negative cases,’ and (d) a participant review. Reflective listening involved restating what participants shared during the interviews so that participants could confirm, deny, or clarify their statements, perceptions, feelings, and so on. The use of systematic data analysis procedures, in addition to what was described earlier, included re-reading portions of the data to ensure that interpretations were grounded in what participants shared about their forest camping experiences. The data was also examined for negative cases, which were “instances in which the cases did not fit within the pattern” (Patton, 2002, p. 554). For example, if a camper shared something about his/her camping experience that was inconsistent with other reported expressions, then this “inconsistent expression” was considered to be a “negative case.” The participant review involved sending each participant a copy of the study results and interpretations so they could confirm or deny that their experiences and associated meanings had been accurately represented.

RESULTS

Camping Group Response Rate

Out of the 42 different “camping groups” that were approached and asked to participate in this study, 38 camping groups (i.e., 80 individual campers) agreed to participate and completed the necessary consent form. Ten of the 38 interviews were conducted with individual campers and 28 were conducted with camping groups of two or more campers. The 90% response rate was attributed largely to the rapport building procedures that were used.

Of the four camping groups who did not participate, two camping groups (both couples) refused to participate upon being approached at their campsites and shared no explanation for their refusal to participate, and two camping groups (3 or more campers) first asked several questions about the study and then indicated that they did not want to participate because they were too busy and did not have the time to devote to an interview. The four non-participating groups were spread out among the campgrounds; one was from Hurricane, two were from Grindstone, and one was from Ravens Cliff. Additional information about these “non-participants” (e.g., demographics, camping mode, etc.) was not collected.

Participant Review Response Rate

Of the thirty-eight camping groups that were sent a copy of the results and a “Participant Review Form,” eighteen completed and returned their forms for a response rate of 47%. All eighteen respondents agreed that the results that they received accurately reflected their camping experience at Mount Rogers with one exception. One White male camper, from the Hurricane Campground, stressed the importance of safety

and the need for Mount Rogers to develop some type of communication system (e.g., pay phone) that campers can use in the event of an emergency.

Participant Characteristics

Campground and Camping Mode

A total of thirty-eight camping groups were interviewed involving eighty individual campers. Twenty camping groups were interviewed from Grindstone campground, twelve from Hurricane, and six from Ravens Cliff (Table 1). These campers used a range of modes for developed forest camping, including tent-camping, pop-up trailers, pull-behind trailers, and motor homes that ranged in length from twenty seven to thirty three feet. Campers in the less developed campground (Ravens Cliff) used tents and a pop-up. The roads in Ravens Cliff did not accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes. Campers in the moderately developed campground (Hurricane) used tents, pop-up campers, pull behind trailers, and a thirty foot motor home. Hurricane could accommodate larger camping vehicles like motor homes because of wider, paved roads, but because it did not have full hook-ups motor homes were rare. Campers in the highly developed campground (Grindstone) tended to use motor homes, pull-behind trailers and pop-up campers. However, one tent-camper from Grindstone participated in this study.

Table 1: Number and Percentage of Developed Forest Campers and Camping Groups by Campground Type and Camping Mode

	# of campers	%	# of camping groups	%
Campground Type				
Less Developed (Ravens Cliff)	13	16.3%	6	15.8%
Moderately Developed (Hurricane)	25	31.2%	12	31.6%
Highly Developed (Grindstone)	42	52.5%	20	52.6%
Total	80	100 %	38	100 %
Camping Mode				
Tent	27	33.7%	14	36.8%
Pop-Up Camper	19	23.8%	9	23.7%
Pull-Behind Trailer	16	20.0%	7	18.4%
Motor Home or Recreational Vehicle (RV)	18	22.5%	8	21.1%
Total	80	100 %	38	100 %

Demographics

Participant demographics (i.e., gender, age, race, camping experience, and state residence) are summarized in Table 2. Of the 80 individual participants, the majority was male (55%). White (99%) was the predominate race. Participants' age ranged from less than eighteen years old to more than seventy years old, and a majority of the campers were either 30-39 years old (26%) or 40-49 years old (26%). A majority of the participants were highly experienced developed campers; forty-one percent of campers had more than twenty-six years of previous developed camping experience. Participants resided in eight different states—most in Virginia (37%) or Tennessee (30%). Marital status was not asked on the demographic survey but it was elicited in the interviews. Twenty-seven married couples, fourteen married individuals, two non-married couples, and one non-married individual participated (Table 3).

Table 2: Participant Demographics Based on Individual Campers

	n	%
Gender		
Male	44	55%
Female	36	45%
Total	80	100%
Age		
Under 18 years old	3	3.8%
19-29 years old	3	3.8%
30-39 years old	21	26.3%
40-49 years old	26	32.5%
50-59 years old	17	21.3%
60-69 years old	8	10.0%
Older than 70 years	2	2.5%
Total	80	100%
Race		
White	79	98.7%
American Indian	1	1.3%
Total	80	100%
Developed Camping Experience		
This was my first year	6	7.5%
2-5 years	1	21.3%
6-10 years	2	2.5%
11-15 years	7	8.8%
16-20 years	5	6.3%
21-25 years	10	12.5%
More than 26 years	33	41.3%
Total	80	100%
State Residence		
Virginia	29	36.7%
Tennessee	24	30.4%
North Carolina	18	22.8%
South Carolina	3	3.8%
Louisiana	2	2.5%
Pennsylvania	1	1.3%
Florida	1	1.3%
Indiana	1	1.3%
Total	80	100%

Table 3: Participants' Marital Status and Camping Mode by Campground

	Marital Status	Camping Mode
Ravens Cliff Campground	Interview #1- Married couple (with grandson)	Pop-Up
	Interview #2- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #3- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #4- Married couple with two kids	Tent
	Interview #5- Non-married couple	Tent
	Interview #6- Married couple	Tent
Hurricane Campground	Interview #7- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #8- Non-married individual	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #9- Three married couples (group of 6 people)	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #10- Married individual with Mom and uncle	Trailer
	Interview #11- Married couple	Camper
	Interview #12- One married couple and one individual	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #13- Married couple	Tent
	Interview #14- Married individual (part of a couple)	Tent
	Interview #15- Married individual (part of a group of 5)	Tent
	Interview #16- Married individual with son	Tent
	Interview #17- Married individual	Tent
	Interview #18- Two married couples (group of 4 people)	Tent
Grindstone Campground	Interview #19- Non-married couple	Tent
	Interview #20- Married individual (part of a couple)	Motor Home (32')
	Interview #21- Married couple	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #22- Married individual (part of a couple)	Trailer (bi-fold)
	Interview #23- Married couple	Trailer (5th wheel)
	Interview #24- Two married women (part of a group of 6)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #25- Married couple	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #26- Two married couples (group of 4 people)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #27- Married couple	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #28- Married couple	Trailer
	Interview #29- Married individual (part of a couple)	Trailer
	Interview #30- Married couple	Trailer
	Interview #31- Married couple	Motor Home (30')
	Interview #32- Married couple (and their married son)	Motor Home
	Interview #33- Married individual (part of a couple)	Tent
	Interview #34- Married couple with daughter-in-law	Motor Home
	Interview #35- Married couple with son	Motor Home
	Interview #36- Married couple	Motor Home
	Interview #37- Two married women (part of a group of 6)	Pop-Up Camper
	Interview #38- Married individual with son	Trailer

Preferred Campground Features

Campers were asked about their preferred campground features. It was believed that campers might differ by the level of development of their campground or by camping mode. For example, campers in the less developed campground might tend to discuss and reference natural features of their campground and campers in the highly developed campground might tend to discuss and reference developed features of their campground. Table 4 identifies the preferred campground features of campers in the Raven Cliff, Hurricane, and Grindstone campgrounds.

The top-five preferred campground features identified by campers in the less developed campground were: campfire/Fire-pit, toilets/bathrooms, seclusion/privacy/solitude, level campsite, and creek/river/stream. The top-five preferred campground features identified by campers in the moderately developed campground were: creek/river/stream, fire-pit/campfire, wooded forests/trees, showers, and toilets/bathrooms. The top-five preferred campground features identified by campers in the highly developed campground were: quiet/lack of noise pollution, seclusion/privacy/solitude, wooded forests/trees, spacious campsites, and water hook-ups.

Table 4: Participants' Preferred Features of Ravens Cliff, Hurricane, and Grindstone Campgrounds in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>)(n=12)	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>)(n=25)	Highly-Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>)(n=42)
Campfire/Fire-pit (10)	Creek/River/Stream (10)	Quiet/Lack of Noise Pollution (12)
Toilets/Bathrooms (7)	Campfire/Fire-pit (8)	Seclusion/Privacy/Solitude (12)
Seclusion/Privacy/Solitude (4)	Wooded Forests/Trees (7)	Wooded Forests/Trees (12)
Level campsite (3)	Showers (5)	Spacious campsites (8)
Creek/River/Stream (3)	Toilets/Bathrooms (4)	Water hook-ups (8)
Fishing opportunities (3)	Seclusion/Privacy/Solitude (4)	Campfire/Fire-pit (5)
Organized, structured campsites (2)	Clean Campsite (4)	Electricity (5)
Access to water (2)	Lack of RVs (3)	Clean Campsite (5)
Wooded Forests/Trees (1)	Spacious campsites (3)	Shaded Campsite (4)
Lack of RVs (1)	Level campsite (2)	Natural Setting/ Opp for nature (4)
Spacious campsites (1)	Beautiful/attractive campground (2)	Cool Temperatures (3)
Picnic table (1)	Dog-friendly (2)	Toilets/Bathrooms (3)
	Ease of off-loading (2)	Recreational opportunities. (3)
	Distance from the main road (2)	Level campsite (2)
	Access to water (2)	Bird sounds (2)
	Flush toilets (2)	Safe/Family-oriented (2)
	Safe/Family-oriented (1)	Presence of hosts/managers (2)
	Shaded Campsite (1)	Access to water (2)
	Outdoor play spaces for kids (1)	Large Campsites (1)
	Mountains (1)	Creek/River/Stream (1)

Influence of Technology on Developed Forest Camping Experiences

One of the research questions in this study was “How does technology influence the modern developed forest camping experience?” In this study, technology was viewed as a general term used to encompass the range of camping gear, electronic devices, and related products that developed forest campers utilized. Technology also included in the camping mode itself.

Expressions related to camping technology and the influence of technology on developed forest camping experiences and associated meanings were sometimes overt and resulted from specific questions (or probes) about camping technology. For example, the probing questions used to elicit information about camping technology included (a) “Describe the camping equipment, gear, and electronics that you brought and used on this camping trip.,” (b) “How important were these items for your camping experience?,” (c) “Did you purchase any equipment, gear, or electronics for this trip?,” (d) “Are you able to experience nature when you camp in a campground that provides a lot of comforts and conveniences?,” and (e) “How does the presence of technology impact your camping experiences?.” Other expressions related to camping technology were couched within participants’ narratives of their developed forest camping trips.

Description of Camping Technologies Utilized

Camping Gear

Campers across all three campground types identified the camping gear and electronics that they utilized as a part of their camping experiences (Table 5). Campers in the less developed campground utilized tents, recreational equipment (i.e., fishing rods, inflatable raft for fishing), an axe, coolers, a lantern, camp chairs, and a Coleman stove.

Campers in the moderately developed campground utilized tents, tarps, camp stoves, Coleman grills, Gore-Tex raincoats, a portable shower, an air-mattress, a rain jacket, nylon bags, a water tank, a screen room, and a portable toilet. Campers in the highly developed campground utilized bicycles, chairs, a screen room, and a portable toilet. Because this list of camping gear is based on self-report, this list of gear may not be complete in terms of what campers actually brought. However, these are the items that were identified and discussed in the interviews. It is also important to note that moderately and highly developed campers that utilized recreational vehicles likely had a range of built-in appliances available to them that might have been classified as “camping gear.” These built-in types of appliances were not inventoried.

Campers in the three campground types were compared based upon the types of camping gear that they utilized on their camping trip. In terms of the technologies associated with camping gear, campers from the moderately developed campground used the most technological-advanced gear (e.g., Gore-text raincoats, nylon bags, etc.), and campers from the less developed campground used the most basic camping gear (i.e., axe, lantern, etc.). In terms of amount and range of camping gear, campers in the highly developed campground brought fewer items and a more narrow range of items. This seems consistent with the fact that a majority of these campers utilized motor homes (which often came with appliances) which reduced their need for many types of camping gear that other campers needed for basic food preparation, shelter, and other needs.

Electronics

Electronics were defined as any item used for developed forest camping that required electricity. Battery-powered items used for entertainment were also included in

this category. Campers in the less developed campground utilized cell phones, a radio/television unit, and a phone. Campers in the moderately developed campground utilized radios, televisions, cell phones, and a VCR. Campers in the highly developed campground utilized televisions, radios, VCR, video game units (e.g., Nintendo, Game Boy, Sega, Play Station), cellular phones, microwave ovens, CD players, satellite dishes, coffeemakers, an electric blankets, a weather radio, an air conditioning unit, an electric grill, a toaster, a HAM radio, and a digital camera. Because this list of camping gear is based on self-report, this list of electronics may not be complete in terms of what campers actually brought. However, these items were identified and discussed in the interviews.

Campers in the three campground types were compared based upon the types of electronics that they used during their camping trip. Campers from the less developed and moderately developed campgrounds used the fewest types of electronics, and campers from the highly developed campground used a wide range of electronic technologies. This also seems consistent with the fact that a majority of these campers utilized motor homes which gave them easier access to electric-related items and because they were camping in a campground which provided electricity, thus making electronic technology much more likely.

Camping Mode

Camping mode included tents and the types of camping vehicles that campers used (i.e., pop-up trailers, pull-behind trailers, and motor homes). Because camping modes inherently reflected the use of technology (fabrics in tents or auto-based technology for camping vehicles), camping mode is included as one of forms of technology that campers utilized for developed forest camping.

Table 5: Participants' Camping Gear and Electronics Across Three Campground Types
(Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed)

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>)	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>)	Highly Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>)
<p>Camping Gear (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreational equip.(2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fishing Rods (1) ○ Inflatable Fishing Raft (1) • Axe (1) • Coolers (1) • Lantern (1) • Camp chairs (1) • Coleman stove (1) 	<p>Camping Gear (23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tents (4) • Tarps (3) • Camp stove (2) • Coleman Grill (2) • Coolers (2) • Chairs (2) • Gore-Tex raincoats (1) • Portable shower (1) • Air-mattress (1) • Rain jacket (1) • Nylon bags (1) • Water tank (1) • Screen Room (1) • Portable Toilet (1) 	<p>Camping Gear (6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycles (2) • Chairs (2) • Screen Room (1) • Portable toilet (1)
<p>Electronics (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cellular phone (2) • Radio/TV (1) • Phone (1) 	<p>Electronics (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio (3) • TV (2) • Cellular phone (2) • VCR (1) 	<p>Electronics (71)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Television (21) • Radio (8) • VCR (8) • Nintendo/Game Boy/ Sega/Play Station (6) • Cellular Phone (3) • Microwave oven (3) • CD player (3) • Satellite Dish (3) • Coffeemaker (2) • Refrigerator (2) • DVD Player (2) • Electric blanket (1) • Weather radio (1) • AC unit (1) • Electric grill (1) • Toaster (1) • Ham radio (1) • Digital camera (1)

Importance and Influence of Camping Technologies

In addition to asking campers about the technologies that they brought and utilized on their camping trips, they were also asked (or probed) about whether or not technologies were important for their developed forest camping experiences and how technologies influenced their experiences. The emergent themes related to camping technologies were “transitioning,” “technology incongruence,” “comfort and convenience,” “distraction,” and “minimalism.”

Transitioning

The most common theme related to technology, which was identified by campers across all of the campground types, was “transitioning.” Transitioning included expressions of how and why campers had transitioned from using one type of camping mode technology to another camping mode. Several categories within “transitioning” were identified, including age, health, financial means, and accommodations for children. For example a White male camper in camping group #28 in the highly developed campground described his transition from a pull-behind trailer to a pop-up and his desire to transition to a more advanced camping mode. He said,

We started camping on the ground, no tent at all, to camping with a pop-up. Of course as we get older we’re looking to go on into something else. Age is a factor. Sleeping on the ground, from sleeping on the ground to getting up off the ground, then to having heat and lights, I mean it’s just ...a little more...convenient. I expect the older we get, I expect to travel more...to hopscotch to different campgrounds and it is hard when you are traveling in a pop-up camper. It’d make it

a whole lot easier just to pull in, set up, just plug up, unplug and pull out.

With the pop-up there's a lot of work involved.

Another factor that influenced campers' "transitioning" from one camping mode technology to another camping mode was health. As a White male camper from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground explained,

We went from a pop-up to a camper because my mom doesn't walk too good. She had bad legs. Her and my uncle both are getting on up in years, and the convenience of having an on-site bathroom was important. And on-site water and all, with the holding tanks and all, that was the main reason too. And, being able to set it up in a matter of ten minutes at the most, here at Hurricane, you're set up and you're good to go. And you pull into Hurricane late at night or something, and ten minutes later you can be getting ready for bed. I always have to think about my mom's health when we're camping.

Financial Means

In addition to age and health, "transitioning" could also be influenced by a campers' means. In other words, some campers expressed that whether or not they could transition to a more expensive and advanced type of camping mode depended on their ability to afford a new type of camping mode. As a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground stated,

We own a hard-shell bi-fold. It's got a complete shower, gas, electric, refrigerator, we have bathroom....it's got everything a larger one would have. We haven't always used this. We used a tent for years, when we

were first married. Young, and lacking for money, and you just gotta go the way you can afford to go, and that's all we could afford at the time. It was a matter of getting off the ground for a change after several years, as we get older we want a little more comfort. You could go to something bigger, but we're satisfied with the smaller type of hardshell pop-up, because like I say it's easy to store and it still has all the conveniences of the big ones...and we can afford it.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground shared,

It's kinda based on money, you do with what you can afford. Early on, you know, I could afford a tent, and in my real younger days, I'd throw my tent and my sleeping bag on the back of a bicycle and a bunch of us heading somewhere and spend a Saturday night out in the woods somewhere, that was our camping experience back in those days. As time went on I did some tent camping with my son when he was old enough to become a Scout. And we did tent camping up until the time we got the pop-up, and we went through two pop-ups, and then there was a couple years we didn't have any, and then we got the trailer, and now the motor home. As we've gotten older we've been able to afford these things.

Accommodations for Children

A fourth reason that campers had transitioned from one camping mode technology to another was to accommodate their children's needs. A White male camper

from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground spoke about how having a child changed his style of camping.

We went from backpacking to our pop-up primarily because of having a child. Growing up, both of our parents, our families spent quite a bit of time camping, so that was just kind of a natural thing that we would. We had a pop-up growing up. Then we moved on up into the travel trailers and that sort of thing. Yeah, we spent quite a few years of my childhood in the pop-up. It's the natural progression---from backpacking or tent-camping to other forms---that's just kind of natural as you grow up. It happened faster for us once we had a child.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground shared,

The pop-up was a nightmare, simply because you have to tear it down in the rain, and there's no bathroom in it. Nowhere to give our kids a bath. You can't drag them out in the middle of the night to the bathhouse, that wasn't convenient, so the next trailer that we got had a bathroom in it. And it had everything in it, but it was pretty small. There was also potty-training, so the whole bathroom thing was important.

Thus, the need for increased convenience while camping with children influenced campers' decisions to purchase and utilize increasingly advanced camping modes.

Although the concept of transitioning was expressed by campers in all three of the campground types, not everyone felt that transition was a necessary part of camping. As

a White male camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground shared,

I prefer tent camping. I would never switch to a pop-up or a trailer. No way. I've stayed in the, you know, the motor-driven ones, a friend of mine, one of the guys that came in, he has a, I think he has about a 31 or 32-footer. To me, [tent-camping] is better. I don't mind sleeping on the ground on a Therm-a-rest. It straightens your back out. Much more pleasant to me. Age doesn't make a difference either. Not to me. Not at all.

Technology Incongruence

The second most common theme related to camping technologies was "technology incongruence." This theme was also expressed by campers in all of the campground types. Technology incongruence was the term given to campers' expressions of how some types of technology did not belong in a camp setting or how some types of technologies were incongruent with preferred nature-based experiences.

Several campers expressed that the presence of some types of technology, particularly electronic technologies like televisions, telephones, and video recorders and players, did not belong in a camp setting. To these campers, electronic technologies were the antithesis of what it meant to go "camping." As a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated,

If we had televisions, and phones, and radios and stuff here, it wouldn't be camping. It would be like going back to work. You know, because people would be calling and people would be trying to get in touch with us, and like, you just can't get away from it if you bring any of that stuff

with you.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground shared,

We really don't want a lot of the technology things out here with us.

We're kinda going back into nature a little bit with it. If we had a lot of technology with us, it wouldn't be a camping experience. I can watch TV at home. Why come out here and waste, and spend your precious time sitting in front of a TV?

Another comment that expressed the incongruence of technology and camping was expressed by a White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground

If there were radios and televisions around us, we wouldn't want to hear them. I mean, that's the kind of the idea of camping, is to get away from boom boxes. Sometimes people bring a bunch of technology with them camping...that's just gadgetry for the sake of gadgetry. We just don't get into that."

To some campers, electronic technologies were incongruent with the type of nature-based camping experience that parents preferred for their children. As a White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared,

We don't need those things. As soon as he gets home, [my son] will be sitting in front of the TV. TVs should not be brought out to a campground. Campers that bring TVs won't be able to do anything, they'll just sit in front of the TV. They should be fishing, playing with their dog, and watching

the fire instead of the TV.

Another White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground stated,

We don't bring TV, radio, phones, and electronic games camping. We don't do that. We really don't even like them to bring toys, but we let them bring a few dolls. Cause we want them to just kind of enjoy the nature, and be caught up in their own world.

Some campers' identified strict guidelines for their children to discourage the use of electronic technology and encourage other types of experiences. A White male camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground explained the ground rules that he established for his daughter (and also on himself) on their camping trip. He said,

My stepdaughter brought a friend camping, and I told them both before we came up here that there wouldn't be any TV or electronic games. I told them they could bring a CD player with headphones, but that would even be limited. Because that's some of the things we're getting away from. I do have a portable satellite dish but I didn't bring it this time. If I had brought it, that's all the two 12-year-old girls would have done. I've not turned the TV on. And they have had a ball. [My stepdaughter and her friend] met friends, or made new friends, when they get out of there after eating breakfast, we probably won't see them except for check-ins, off and on all day. But they would never have experienced that if there was a TV on. They never would have experienced that had I not laid the ground rules before we left.

Comfort and Convenience

The third theme related to camping technologies was “comfort and convenience.” This theme was expressed by campers in all of the campground types. “Comfort and convenience” represented campers’ expressions of the importance of various forms of camping technology to enhance their overall comfort and to make camping more convenient by making certain camping tasks easier. A White male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground shared his perspective on technology. He said,

Technology has been important to our trip. I mean, we wouldn’t be here if we didn’t have waterproof tents and nice nylon bags to put all of our stuff in, and plastic coolers to keep our ice frozen and our food secure. This kind of stuff is the kind of thing that we need, it really makes camping more comfortable.

For some campers, a desire for comfort occurred as they got older. This was different from the “age” category of the “transition” theme in that these campers did not have specific health or age-related constraints. These campers just developed a preference for a more comfortable form of camping. As a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground shared,

I actually like the idea of being comfortable now, and not roughing it. I used to get off on the challenges of nature and weather and beating something, I’d hunt when it was an ice storm, and I would fish in the middle of February in western Maryland, and it would be four degrees outside and my friend and I would be backpacking and we could tell

our friends that we caught brook trout when it was four degrees outside, you know, and the ranger said we were the only people in the park.

That used to be kind of a fun thing for me. Now, the hell with it ...

I don't care if I'm one of the masses...I just want to be comfortable.

Campers who were not accustomed to spending time in nature expressed the importance of technology for comfort and convenience in order for them to have the type of camping experience that they preferred. As a White female camper from camping group #38 in the less developed campground shared,

I want to be comfortable while I'm [camping] in, I call this the wilderness.

To me it is the wilderness. When I camp, the boys have been camping in a tent before, but I am just not a tent camper. I've got to have my blow dryer and my curling iron, you know, of course I haven't used it yet, but I have to have those comforts, yes, it's important to me, because I was raised in the city, I don't know no better. To me, the trees and the birds make this a wilderness.

Another female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground shared a similar perspective when she said,

I appreciate that people can have, quote, the nature experience and go spend time in the woods and all that, but that's not where I'm coming from. I'm not where they are. We, my family did not camp when I was a child. This is kind of a new experience for me. And this is probably as close as it's gonna get for a nature experience for me (laughs). So I'm typically...roughing it means slow room service. So, this is, I've really

enjoyed this. And I feel like you get what you create of the experience, and if you want to have all the amenities and comforts you can do that, or if you want to have a nature experience you can do that. I probably wouldn't have any kind of nature experience if it weren't for the amenities, because that's just not who I am, not my comfort level.

A White female camper from camping group #25 in the highly developed campground shared how watching movies contributed to she and her husband's camping experience. She explained,

We have a television. Actually when we're at home we don't have time to watch TV. So part of our camping fun is watching movies, we go rent movies and videos and things like that and watch. My brother calls us the advanced campers. Our camping's not his kind of rustic camping. He likes the tent camping and he cooks over the fire. We have a microwave and TV, refrigerator, air conditioning, heat. Those types of conveniences are important.

To some campers, technology was found in their modern camping gear. To these campers, gear technology was important for their camping experience. For example, a White male camper from camping group #14 in the moderately developed campground explained the importance of his gear. He said,

We're great believers in getting the best gear you can...waterproof gear and stuff like that, especially on weekends like this when it's raining, see, we went through a downpour Friday night but we came through it just fine. We stayed dry. I'm real particular about my fly fishing

equipment, it's the best you can get, basically. I've just always been a believer in having the good stuff because it'll help you if, you know, if times get tough.

Another camper, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground talked about a new piece of camping gear that he used on his trip. He shared,

Speaking of technology, I need to admit something. We got a gift from somebody, and it's a self-inflating double or queen-size air mattress.

And we brought it. I have all the little roll-out mats we could have brought, and it would have been fine. But we have a battery-operated air mattress. And we've used it. It's a big old thing. It was great.

A majority of the campers in the highly developed campground who were interviewed for this study used satellite dishes. To these campers, a satellite dish was an important technology. A White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground explained the importance of finding a good signal.

When we got a satellite dish the site became important, well, what sites could we use the satellite dish in? So that more or less dictates what sites you get nowadays, if we want to use the satellite dish. There's, the foliage is so thick over here that there's very few locations that you have a clear view of the sky. Right here in this open field is real good, if you can get near it, then you know you can set one up there. It's not unusual to see four or five dishes usually sitting in that area."

A White male camper from camping group #29 in the highly developed campground shared his reasons for using a satellite dish. He said,

I've got a dish receiver set up out here in the field up here now. Well, we've got a satellite system on here. It's portable but you know I use it everywhere I can get a signal. I like the dish because I like to keep up with financial matters and current events. So to me it's rather important. I wouldn't want to go back to not having a TV. I couldn't stand it if these things were taken away.

Distraction

The fourth theme related to camping technologies was "distraction." This theme was specific to campers in the highly developed campground who had brought electronic technologies that were generally not as common in the less developed and moderately developed campground. "Distraction" represented how campers used technology as a distraction from boredom and in situations in which severe weather did not allow them to be outside and participating in other camping-related activities and experiences. A White male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground talked about how his satellite dish and television were a distraction for him and his wife. He said,

We use the satellite dish quite a bit, really. When we first got it. We've got it now so we could just watch decent TV, cause when you're camping a lot of times you don't have a good signal to watch TV, from local stations. The television comes in real handy when it's pouring down rain and you can't get outside or anything, you have something to fall back on besides reading. I do, I try to catch up on my reading when I'm up here.

And so she, she does more reading than I do. But you can't read all the time, you get bored, so television is a distraction from boredom.

The importance of technology as a distraction was identified by parents who were camping with their children. As a White female camper from camping group #24 in the highly developed campground shared,

When the rain started, the television was something to keep the four kids that would much rather be doing something else, it was a good thing to occupy them. The television will, and it does, suck them in and get them interested in something other than the fact that it's raining.

Even campers who felt that television and electronic games were not a part of the camping experience used these items as a distraction during inclement weather. As a White male camper from camping group #35 in the highly developed campground described,

We have a TV, a Sega, a Play Station, and I've got a Play Station 2 in the motor home. It's nice to have when it's raining and you can't go outside. That's when we use it the most. But, usually, like you find us right here at the fire cooking soup all day. This stuff isn't necessary for camping. But it sure comes in handy.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #20 in the highly developed campground shared,

We're guilty of bringing a lot of stuff with us. Actually there's two TVs and a Play Station and a DVD player in there. We have two TVs. The kids can watch their movies, and we're back here and we watch whatever

we want. That's about the only way [our kids] will go to bed at night is to watch TV. The Play Station is used as a DVD player. Now when it rained Wednesday [the Play Station and TV] worked out great, we sat in there and watched a movie.

Minimalism

The fifth theme related to camping technologies was "minimalism." This theme was not as common as the other technology themes and was represented in the comments of only a few campers. This theme represented the perspective of campers who did not want excess technology during their camping experiences because of their desire to have a more basic type of experience. As a White female camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground shared,

[My husband] loves to keep things as basic as we can, and almost on purpose. We don't want to get to that next level [of buying a motor home] yet. We might down the road need to be there in something a little more comfort-related, but we're trying to have more of an outdoor experience, so we try to keep our gear and everything to the point where we spend a majority of our time outside. No matter really what the conditions are. He likes making sure that he has all the necessary, I would say still basic, items, but you know, I – look over there, we don't really have anything at all, really high-tech. We are still in that mode. We're trying to stay where this is the outdoor experience, and somewhat roughing it.

Another White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground, who described himself and his wife as minimalists, shared their perspective on technology.

We are minimalists. It's basically just backpacking gear that we're just using to car camp with too. We don't have a big, one of those Coleman stoves. We also don't have any other types of technology, like a television, radio, GPS, or anything else. That's just not the kind of stuff we need.

Perceptions of 'RV Campers'

The sixth theme is different than the first five themes. The first five themes were directly related to campers' perspectives of the importance or influence of technology relative to their desire forest camping experiences. However, "perception of RV campers" was directly related to a group of campers (i.e., RV campers), who were perceived by campers in the less developed and moderately developed campgrounds, as campers who used a lot of technology and required a lot of comforts and thus were not genuine "campers." Campers were not asked a specific question about their perception of RV campers (i.e., campers that used a motor home or other large recreational vehicle for camping), but comments about RV campers were often shared.

Generally speaking, RV campers were associated with undesired campground conditions, such as noise pollution. As a White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground shared,

We don't like the RVs and the big party scene, we don't care for that. We like it primitive and secluded, like we're out in the middle of nowhere. If there were RVs that could make it up here, this experience wouldn't be

what we wanted it to be. It would get to be loud and obnoxious.

A White female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground, who was originally from Australia, shared similar sentiments. She said,

I use a tent rather than other types of sleeping equipment because it's what I am used to. I don't like being in a building. If I was like in an RV or something, I would feel like I was inside a building. I need air. Here in America, when I say to somebody else, we're going camping, and they say, oh, you've got an RV. I mean in Australia, I don't think I've ever seen an RV in Australia...nothing like these monstrosities that you get here. Some people need all their comforts. And, you know, I'm not being critical. Some people, that is their experience, OK. It's not mine, but I think keeping campgrounds like Ravens Cliff around will keep those big vehicles out, which tend to bring a lot of noise.

RV campers were sometimes perceived as something other than "true campers."

A White male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground expressed his view of RV campers when he shared,

There's the RV group, the people that bring, to me, bring the city with them. They've got their TVs and their ovens, and their microwaves and what-not in their RVs, it's like, what's the point? I know the point is to get away from where you were at, so, and that's the point of any vacation or trip, to get away from where you're at.

A White female camper from camping group #5 in the less developed campground shared a similar view of RV campers when she compared the Ravens Cliff Campground with other, more developed campgrounds. She stated,

[Ravens Cliff] is a lot better than the [campgrounds] with electricity cause you don't have as much hassle and you don't have the high fees and you don't have, you know, with that you've got the RVs and all that mess. RV campers are not campers. They have to have everything luxurized in order for them to make it and that's not camping.

A White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground described how the presence of RV campers impacted his camping experiences. He said,

I chose Ravens Cliff because I knew the trout stream...was gonna be here and everything, and I knew it wasn't like a real RV kind of place, a place to still be able to camp and put up a tent and feel comfortable. Cause when you camp with all the RVs and everything, it just makes it a little bit, you know, I don't know...artificial.

In summary, this section explored how the participants in this study utilized technology. Technology was broadly defined to include camping gear, electronics, and camping mode. The results indicated that campers used a range of camping gear and electronics. Campers from the less developed campground tended to bring fewer pieces of camping gear, used a narrower range of items, and used the fewest types of electronics. Campers from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds used the most technologically-advanced gear and used a broader range of electronics than campers from

the less developed campground. Campers from the highly developed campground did not use as many individual pieces of camping gear, but they used a range of electronics.

This section also summarized the importance and influence of technology on developed forest camping experiences through the themes of transitioning, technology incongruence, comfort and convenience, distraction, minimalism, and perceptions of “RV campers.” Many campers discussed the importance of their camping mode, gear, and electronics to promote comfort and conveniences and for a distraction, particularly during inclement weather. Campers also discussed the transition that occurs as developed campers move from tent-camping to increasingly sophisticated camping modes.

Although technology was important, campers across all three campground types suggested that technology is often incongruent with the type of nature-based camping experience that they preferred. For a few campers, technology was in complete opposition to the basic, minimalist style of camping that they were trying to experience. Finally, some campers associated technology with RV camping and suggested that RV campers relied too much on technology and associated comforts and thus were not true ‘campers.’

Table 6: Influence of Technologies (Camping Mode, Camping Gear, and Electronics) on Camping Experiences Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed)

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>) <i>13 participants; 6 camping groups</i>	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>) <i>25 participants; 12 camping groups</i>	Highly Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>) <i>42 participants; 20 camping groups</i>
<p>Technology Incongruence (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids not allowed to bring TV, radio, phone, electronic games; kids create their play and experience nature (3) • Did not bring radio, TV, other electronics→ listen to nature (1) 	<p>Transitioning (16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-related constraints (7) • Greater flexibility (6) • Decreased set-up time (3) • Something different (1) 	<p>Transitioning (23)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-related constraints (9) • Desire for comfort/convenience (6) • Accommodations for children (5) • Health-related (2) • Safety (1)
<p>Comfort and Convenience (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bathrooms (1) • Low camping fee (1) 	<p>Technology Incongruence (13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronics ≠ “camping” (6) • Escape TVs and radios at home (4) • Kids not allowed electronics (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Need to experience camping (2) ○ Need exercise (1) • Brought electronics→ did not use (1) 	<p>Comfort and Convenience (13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hookups are convenient (2) • Bathroom important (2) • Fear nature/don’t want nature (2) • Cold storage (1) • Cooking when it is raining (1) • Kids have own beds (1)
<p>Transitioning (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-related constraints (1) • Financial means (1) 	<p>Comfort and Convenience (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator (3) • Television (1) • Radio (1) • Hot showers (1) • Water/electricity (1) • Waterproof fabrics (1) 	<p>Distraction (15)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For kids (general) (5) • When it is raining (5) • Keep kids occupied (3) • When it is cold (1) • Watching movies→ camping (1)

Table 6 (continued)

Minimalism (1)	Minimalism (1) • Technology isn't needed	Technology Incongruence (13) • Electronics ≠ "camping" (6) • Want to escape technology (2) • Radios, TVs not necessary (2) • Electronics unnecessary (1) • Don't want kids to use electronics (2)
		Minimalism (2) • Keep camping basic

Salient Elements of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

Another research question in this study was, “What are the most salient elements of modern developed forest camping experiences?” To be considered salient, an element of forest camping experience had to be mentioned repeatedly or be connected to some important aspect of campers’ forest camping trip. For example, simply stating that it had rained that day was not necessarily sufficient for “rain” to be identified as a salient quality of a forest camping experience. However, a rain event that a camper described as ruining their first day of the camping trip was sufficient for “rain” to be identified as a salient quality of the experience. As a second example, a camper that stated that he/she was camping with his/her children was not sufficient to be considered a salient description of the forest camping experience. However, a camper’s description of a five-hour bike trip in which all of the family members were talking and interacting was considered salient.

The major themes related to the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences were:

- activities,
- social interaction,
- psychological states and feelings, and
- setting.

Although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency were believed to

represent a greater degree of commonality with regards to developed forest campers' experiences.

Activity

One of the most common salient themes of developed forest camping experiences was "activity"- what campers were doing during their camping trip. The "activity" theme was broad and contained several categories, including (a) pre-trip activities, (b) nature-based activities, (c) activities involving social interaction, (d) activities involving basic human needs, (e) recreation/leisure activities that did not require technology and (f) recreation/leisure activities that required technology.

Pre-Trip Activities

Pre-trip planning was an important component of the developed forest camping experience. As a White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground suggested,

We planned this for a long time. I think the planning part of it is fun, the looking forward to it for a very long time, kind of pulls you along in your day-to-day life until you say, 'Oh, we're going camping.'

Campers in all three campground types discussed the planning stage of their camping trips. From the less developed campground, a female camper from camping group #4 shared that "...we came down here and checked out the campground...it's been about two months ago when we came down." Another female camper from the less developed campground in camping group #6 described that "[my husband] did some research... well, he had a book and we also did some research on the internet."

Visiting the campground before the camping trip was also important to campers, as a male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground suggested,

The other campgrounds were reserved. The ones that weren't reserved, we really didn't like. And then so we checked out this, we actually scoped it out about a week beforehand, and just to see what we could do. It was definitely, you know, planned out. Once again, I mean, I don't know what the campground was like this weekend, you know, over at Grindstone. They could be bumper-to-bumper RVs and we could have been like, you know, this is the worst experience, you know. But right now, Hurricane is really cool.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground described,

We actually did quite a bit of research in terms of campgrounds. My husband actually took a drive up here one whole day and toured campgrounds and just basically eliminated what we didn't want, and you know...actually looked at sites that we wanted to see and that we wanted to reserve in the future.

Pre-trip planning was also important for what campers described as the "popular campgrounds." A female camper from camping group #34 in the highly developed campground said,

[Grindstone] is within a network that you can reserve on line and look at what's available. It's a fabulous setup...I really liked the on-line registration

...I didn't even care that there was a cost associated with it. We have set out on too many occasions trying to be spontaneous campers and we have got into situations where a couple times we've had to turn home, there's been no availability on prime time weekends. That's probably the biggest surprise that I've had with camping, because you think of it as....oh, we're going to load in the car, we're gonna head out, you end up someplace. Especially when you're kind of geared to holiday weekends, you can't do that. Because you will find a closed gate on the other end if you haven't prepared – we prepare sometimes a year ahead for holiday weekends.

Other campers engaged in pre-camp rituals to get organized for their camping trip. For example, a female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground shared,

...I started like a month ago organizing everything, getting all those little gizmos that would make camping a little easier...it's the anticipation, the anxiety, the adventure, the romance, everything like all balled into one. It's different planning for camping versus planning a regular trip. Cause on a regular trip it's like, well I got to plan for sleeping and something to do on the road, where with camping it's all about, when I get there what kind of an adventure is it gonna be? And when you get home you've got all kinds of different stories to tell.

Activities Involving Human-Nature Interaction

Campers in the all of the campgrounds engaged in a range of nature-based activities. In the less developed campground, salient nature-based activities included

gathering and chopping wood, building and watching their campfires, fishing, hiking, swimming, skipping rocks, and walking through the forest. In the moderately developed campground, salient nature-based activities included gathering wood, building and watching their campfires, fishing, fly-fishing, hiking, hunting, exploring the creeks, biking the Virginia Creeper Trail, playing outside, chopping wood, and practicing primitive-type skills. In the highly developed campground, salient nature-based activities included building, watching, and maintaining campfires, hiking, gathering wood, walking the trails and through the woods, biking, birding, and spending time at the creek and wading pool.

Walking and exploring in the woods was a common activity. A female camper from the less developed campground in camping group #2 shared how she and her husband “spent a lot of time just walking through the forest, which was beautiful. We had a couple of swims in the river, and then in the evening we sat down by the river with a bottle of champagne, and then yesterday we went exploring.” Hiking was also an important way that campers interacted with nature. A male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated,

We hiked Mt. Rogers – I don’t know...it was great out in the mountains.

The high point was reaching the top of Mt. Rogers. We started from Grayson Highlands, so it was about 8 miles round trip. It’s beautiful. The terrain goes from, you know, like bald top mountains to you know, pine forests, to rocks, like the whole trail’s rocks, one part. Then there’s the wild ponies up there, and that was a lot of fun.

Campers' descriptions of their camping activities suggest that nature-based activities were prevalent among developed forest campers regardless of their campground type. Campers in the moderately-developed and highly developed seemed to engage in a greater diversity of nature-based activities which might be attributed to the additional equipment that those campers were able to carry in their trailers, campers, and motor homes.

Activities Emphasizing Social Interaction

Social interaction was a primary component of many of the salient activities that campers described. This category did not include general statements about social interaction, but rather specific expressions of activities that required social interaction with one or more people. In the less developed campground, these activities included teaching, storytelling, and helping each other. As a White male camper from camping group #6 described,

Our oldest daughter is in Girl Scouts so she worked on some of her Girl Scout things on some of her badges. She had to find certain things, so we thought that's a good thing to do with kids, is come up with a list of things for them to look for throughout the camping trip, cause we're gonna go camping again in about a month with some other kids, so that's a good activity. It was something that we could all do together.

In the moderately developed campground, salient social interaction-based activities included talking and playing cards with family members and working together to set-up the campsite. For example, a comment from a female camper from camping group #18 described the socially-focused nature of her camping experience. She said,

This trip's been about teamwork...we all threw the camp together. And the next morning we have a small bite to eat, the guys go off and toured the mountain. Then later in the afternoon everybody comes back, we have a small little hamburger or something, then we go off on your nature trail walk. Walked all the way down to the end and back. And then come back and had the real meal for the night and sat around here and talked about war stories and the news and whatever else, like that. We had six years to catch up on. So there was a lot of talking.

In the highly-developed campground, social interaction-based activities included preparing a big family dinner, sharing large family meals, sons fishing with their dad, talking to family members around the campfire, and telling stories.

For many campers, visiting with friends and family members who lived close to the MRNRA was a salient aspect of the camping experience. A male camper from camping group #17 in the moderately developed campground shared, "the main purpose of this [camping trip] was to meet with my other friends from Saltville...I know the hosts and a lot of the campers that come here. My friends and I have been backpacking for years." Similarly, a female camper from camping group #35 in the highly developed campground explained,

[My husband]'s parents came up yesterday evening and had supper with us and we cooked out, stayed outside. That's when we see my parents most, when we're camping. They come up, cause they live in Bristol, so when we're out camping they'll meet us and have supper with us and hang out. We probably talk to them more when we're camping.

Another female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground shared,

Our kids, they all live around, in Marion and down in Chilhowie and different areas, and they all come up and share meals with us, sometimes they'll stay an extra night, or just come and let the kids play, bring their bicycles and stuff, it's a good place for the kids to play. It's a great place for us to be together.

Camping activities often revolved around the campfire. As a male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground shared,

The fire pit was very important. We were concerned and afraid that it was going to rain because it's just nice to be around the fire, I guess maybe it's just, I, what do I want to say...kind of an archaic cultural thing. Because it used to be, the fire was the center of everything. You cooked your food, and eat yourselves, and it's just, that was the focal point of our civilization's culture, keep that fire going, make sure you keep that fire going. So that's our energy, that's our, where we cook our food.

But more than just a focal-point for experience, the campfire was often the center of social interaction. As a male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground explained, "we gather most of the time here, there's sometimes twenty or thirty of us that are around the campfire. We talk, we sing, we play cards, tell jokes, play some more cards." Similarly, a female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground, said, "In the evening we've been having a wonderful campfire...roasting marshmallows and making s'mores and just doing the campfire

thing. It's just something nice about the family sitting around the campfire, talking, and just having family time.

Activities Involving Basic Human Needs (Food and Shelter)

Another set of salient camping activities involved things that campers did to meet their basic needs for food and comfortable shelter. For campers in all three camping groups, this theme included activities related to setting up their campground, cooking, and eating. A male camper from camping group #3 from the less developed campground emphasized the importance of getting the campsite organized when she shared, "getting our wood in was our main thing, and getting set up like we wanted it, you know. I have to have everything in one little place...everything's got to be where we can go out and get it..." A female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground described how her camping group's experience revolved around food.

When we're camping, food is a big deal. It's the biggest. When you come camping, it's like here I am in my head saying, OK, we can have such and such for breakfast for one meal, we can have such and such for dinner, I'll take this for supper, but when you're actually out here camping it's, it's not breakfast, dinner, or supper – it's whenever.

Recreation/Leisure Activities Not Requiring Technology

Developed forest campers spoke at great length about their recreation and leisure activities, and one emergent category was activities that did not require technology. In the less developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, walking, and playing non-electronic games. In the moderately developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, Frisbee, football, biking, reading, and watching grandchildren

play. In the highly developed campground, these activities included resting/relaxing, creating a journal, reading, knitting, napping, kids participating in a parade and biking, playing guitar/singing, basketball, cards, walking, and participating in activities with one's children.

For campers in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds, organized youth activities were offered by the USDA Forest Service. These activities ranged from nature-based interpretation and exploration activities to a dress-up bike parade. For some parents, organized activities for kids were an important part of their developed forest camping experience. For example, a White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground shared,

We went off-site yesterday because we knew today they'd start having the activities for the kids. They had their bike parade and the watermelons, and then they're having singing tonight, and then tomorrow they're having activities all day long tomorrow, starting at 10:00 in the morning. Those kinds of activities are very important, it's one of the reasons we came to Grindstone. The kids enjoy [programs at Grindstone]. They really love, they love it. They're always saying, 'Can we go back to Grindstone?'

Recreation/Leisure Activities Requiring Technology

A second category related to recreation and leisure activities included those that required technology. Campers in the less developed campground listened to music with small "boom-boxes" and drove into local towns. As a White male from camping group #3 in the less developed campground explained,

We bring a radio. We listen to the news. We listened to the race yesterday...

about the last twenty laps of it, but you know, then we bring tapes...If it's too quiet – you know, it sounds kind of silly in one way, but we like it to be quiet but then if it gets too quiet, you know, we're used to having radios or TVs or stuff going on at home. You just bring it over here, listen to the news or like, you know, knowing that the race is coming on, you know, we're going to listen to the race...

Campers in the moderately developed campground played electronic games and took trips into local towns. Campers in the highly developed campground participated in a wide range of activities that required technology, including listening to the radio, playing electronic games, and watching VHS and DVD movies (i.e., electronic technology) and driving to local town and regional destinations such as Blue Ridge Parkway, the Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia, White Top Mountain, and Grayson Highland State Parks (i.e., use of automobile technology). A White male from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground shared,

We use the satellite dish quite a bit, really. We've got it so we can just watch decent TV, cause when you're camping a lot of times you don't have a good signal to watch TV, from local stations. This is a good place up here, because you're high and you get a lot of stations. The television comes in real handy when it's pouring down rain and you can't get outside or anything, you have something to fall back to besides reading.

To some campers, forest camping provided the perfect opportunity to utilize technology. As a White female from camping group #25 in the highly developed campground described, "We have a television. Actually when we're at home we don't

have time to watch TV. So part of our camping fun is watching movies, we go rent movies and videos and things like that and watch. We've watched a couple of movies already.

Activities Related to Human-Companion Animal Interaction

Several of the developed forest campers brought companion animals with them during their camping experience. In most cases, these companion animals were dogs, however, in one case a camper brought a motor home full of cats. For campers in the moderately developed campground and the highly developed campground, spending time with their dogs, walking their dogs, and playing with their dogs were prominent activities of their camping experiences. A male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground explained how he and his dog spent time when camping.

I walk up and down the campground and take the dog for a walk. She got up this morning, about 6:30, 6 or 6:30. She wanted up, jumped up and looked at me like, I want where you're at, and I figured that linoleum floor must have got cold... she was shivering. I got her up with me, and she was fine. We spend all of our time together. I won't camp anywhere that won't let me bring her.

Some campers shared that they selected specific campgrounds based upon how compatible the site would be with their dog(s). For example, a female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated, "...we wanted somewhere where the dog wouldn't bother other people as much, but needless to say he's been running off and being a pest anyway. A campground that could accommodate our dog was a priority for sure. He's part of our camping."

Campers in the less developed campground did not mention spending time with companion animals as a salient aspect of their forest camping experiences.

Social Interaction

A second salient theme of developed forest camping experience was social interaction. The theme included expressions of human social interaction as a salient aspect of developed camping. Campers in all of the campground types talked about the many ways that they interacted with others, and these opportunities for social interaction were prevalent and woven as a thread throughout their discussions of their forest camping experiences.

There was consistency across all the of the campground types in that spending time with friends and family members (including their spouse and children) was salient. As a White female camper from camping group #2 from the less developed campground shared,

Who I'm with is the number one priority when I am camping. For me it's most important to be with [my husband], because, well, he's my experience, I suppose, he's teaching me all those things, all the plants and animals.

Campers in the less developed campground also discussed talking with non-family members of their camping group and simply visiting with other campers.

Campers in the moderately developed campground also discussed meeting new people, fellowship with other campers, and campers helping one another. The way that campers help one another was exemplified in a situation described by a White male from camping group #10 from the moderately developed campground. He explained,

Some trees fell down on the road. The word just spread around through the campsites and the next thing you know we had – what was it, six of us that went up there? Then [another camper], who had just gotten to Hurricane, just went and helped – he was waiting to come in, and set up, and he just pitched right in there with us and we just all pulled together in the situation of need like that. I don't know, people that camp, I mean, you may not know them from Adam, but if something happens and you need help with a vehicle, or a camper, or animal, or person, they're right there standing by your side.

Campers in the highly developed campground also discussed the campfire as the center for social interaction, entertaining family members who visited the campground from local towns, and the notion of creating memories with other campers.

Psychological States and Feelings

A third salient theme of developed forest camping experience was psychological states and feelings. This theme included expressions of how developed forest camping elicited specific psychological states, emotional responses, or feelings. Campers in the less developed campground discussed happiness, peacefulness, surprise/concern, and desires related to comfort and convenience. Campers in the moderately developed campground discussed peacefulness, frustrations, desires related to comfort, and concern/fear. Campers in the highly developed campground discussed peacefulness, enjoyment, misery, frustration, desires related to comfort, appreciation, and concern.

Some campers identified how their psychological states and feelings changed during their camping trip. For example, a White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground described his experience hiking Mt. Rogers.

We hiked Mt. Rogers. The high point was reaching the top of Mt.

Rogers. The low point was thinking that we still had miles to walk to get back. The trail going up's rocky. And coming back down, you're getting tired and you're still walking on rocks for a mile. And both of us at one point were just like, this has got to be over soon. But then, you know, you get past that and it's fine. There are times when it's not as much fun as you pictured it was going to be, but once you actually accomplish it, you know, however long you're going, it's a good feeling.

Some campers felt strong emotions during their camping experiences, such as anxiety and fear. As a White male camper from camping group #7 from the moderately developed campground shared,

Yeah, it put the true fear in me. I hate lightning. I've been caught in it before, I can physically feel it when it's close, and it's not comfortable. We were coming along here the other day and one popped near the truck (laughs) and I about jumped into her lap when I was driving, so she got to see the wimpy husband that she married. That stuck with me all night.

Setting

A fourth salient theme of developed forest camping experience was "setting," which included expressions related to the environmental setting of camping. This theme

was comprised of three categories: campground/campsite characteristics, nature, and camping mode.

Campground/Campsite Characteristics

One of the main categories in the setting theme was “campground/campsite characteristics.” Campers often referenced their campsite and campground when describing their forest camping experiences. Campers in the less developed campground discussed the privacy and seclusion provided by their campsite, the absence of buildings, the presence of portable toilets, and other campsite characteristics such as shady, quiet, and clean. In addition to privacy, seclusion, and the desire for a clean campsite, campers in the moderately developed campground also discussed friendly campers as a salient setting feature related to the campsite, as well as the lack of motor homes, the natural setting, access to conveniences, and a family-oriented atmosphere.

Campers in the highly developed campground identified a range of campsite/campground characteristics that were salient aspects of their experience. The most common responses included quietness, privacy/seclusion, planned activities for kids, safe places for kids to play, solitude, a campsite layout that reduced the noises associated with other camping groups, friendly campers, access to water, and a wading pool. Having access to a fire-pit for campfire-building and watching was important across all three campground types.

Several campers indicated an understanding that they were on public lands and expressed a preference for camping in campgrounds that were on public lands. A White male camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground shared his perspective on the differences between public and private campgrounds. He shared,

The difference between this and a private campground. See, a private campground, you have to cater to the clientele. Where up here, they cater to the environment. I love that. No way I would come [to Grindstone] and have children running around on motorcycles and then you hear these trail bikes and stuff running around – no. No, I don't want to hear that. I think that is modernization. That's modernization. I mean, that's, you see it on television, you hear it on radio, and you live it at home. But camping is a different element. No, you don't need that. It should be close to primitive, but like I said a while ago, the modern conveniences, yes they are handy, but that would not stand in our way from camping.

Nature

The second major category in the setting theme was “nature,” which included concrete and sensory-based expressions of nature, symbolic expressions of nature, and expressions of nature-based experiences. There was considerable agreement across the three campground types regarding how nature was a salient aspect of the developed forest camping experience.

Expressions about nature were often tangible, referring to specific aesthetic qualities of the natural environment. For campers in the less developed campground, the most salient aspect of nature was scenic beauty represented by the creek, trees, quiet, animals, weather, and insects. Campers in the moderately developed and highly developed campgrounds also discussed scenic beauty (i.e., mountains, Cripple Creek, wild horses on Mount Rogers), but the weather was also a salient quality of nature because several powerful thunderstorms had influenced their camping experience.

Expressions of nature were also sensory-based; campers expressed nature in terms of how they could experience nature through their senses. For example, a White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground shared,

We're originally from the city. We like the trees and the shade from the trees. Our other site had full sunshine, and I'm more up the sunshine alley, I'm going to lay out and get a suntan, you know. I like to feel the sun on my face. But my boys and [my husband], they sweat and they like..., they love the shade right here, so I think what we'll do is we'll trade off. Every other year we'll go sunny and shady, sunny and shady. Now these trees, I like to wake up in the morning and smell the forest around me, I love that.

A male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground spoke about his wife's experience at the top of Mt. Rogers,

The high point so far would be her petting them ponies, we got to see the wild ponies yesterday on top of Grayson. On top of the mountain. Now she likes horses, but she rarely gets a chance to see them and touch them, and she really liked that. And that was beautiful up there.

Nature, as a salient aspect of developed forest camping, was not always expressed in terms of its physical or sensory-based properties. Campers sometimes spoke about nature in symbolic ways. For example, a camper in the less developed campgrounds described nature as a peaceful "sanctuary" (White female camper from camping group #9), and a White male camper from camping group #27 in the highly developed campground expressed how the natural camp setting was "untouched land, untouched forest, cleanliness, it's just nature, you know, it's ain't got no city to it...you walk right

off the side there and you can walk two minutes and it's like you're one hundred miles from anywhere."

Nature-Based Experiences in a Developed Setting?

Campers across all of the campground types expressed that they were receiving a nature-based experience even though they were camping in a road accessible campground in which pavement, human-made structures, and other non-natural features were commonplace, particularly in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. A White male camper from camping group #36 in the highly developed campground explained how some of his friends felt about his type of motor home based camping. He shared, "...a lot of people consider this not to be camping, if you have a motor home...they think you have to be roughing it." Another camper from the highly developed campground (White male camper from camping group #22) talked about how he reconciled his feelings about nature and all of the human-made properties of the developed campground. He said,

When you're camping in a developed campground you've got to kinda overlook the pavement. You just overlook it. Look up. I mean, you've got to have a little imagination. I mean, you're not going to get anywhere where it's perfect. I used to do a lot of hunting. You'd get back in the woods and you'd think no one has ever been there before. You'd find a cigarette pack, or a pop can. And you're gonna find that everywhere.

You've got to overlook that.

A similar perspective was shared by a White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground, who shared,

Camping is like getting back to nature. Even when you hear those sounds [of cars on the road], I can block that right out of there. You know. I know the road's down there but I can block it right out. Just block it out, and if you walk up here five minutes you don't hear that, you know, only five minutes away.

A male camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground suggested that whether or not he was able to receive a nature-based experience in a developed campground was dependent upon where he lived. He compared the Hurricane campground with his permanent residence in explaining how he was getting a "wilderness" experience.

In this setting I was able to have a wilderness experience. But it's all relative. I come from a city of, an area, with a population of a million. So what's your perspective? What are you relating it to? I'm relating it right now, I'm relating this experience to my life in the triangle area. So it's just relative to where you are, what you're looking for, your experiences.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground noted that camping in a developed campground was better than not camping at all. She explained,

To me, this is better than nothing. I'd rather camp here than stay at home. So you know, I just accept [this development] as just part of being in America. You know, bloody dogs barking or something, but you know, it's still better than nothing. But one of the highlights...particularly here

in Virginia, is the amount of woodlands...the amount of forest that's still around, that really has impressed me a lot.

As this camper suggested, the degree to which a developed campground allowed for a "natural" type of experience was often equated with the amount of forests on the landscape. This perception was shared by other campers. A White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground said, "I call this the wilderness. To me it is the wilderness. I was raised in the city...to me, the trees and the birds make this a wilderness." A White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground stated,

I look for the wilderness-type setting. I'm thankful that, I guess, our forefathers foreseen all this country here to preserve it, and we have come in here, I guess four or five generations prior to us, and decided to put a campground here, and one here, and one there, but still leave it in almost a natural setting, you know. That's sort of what I look for. I look for a lot of trees, just being back away from everything.

Some campers even suggested that they were in a primitive environment. For example, a camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground said, "I like it around here because it's basic and primitive, but you've got everything you need. Yeah. This is primitive camping, and I love it."

Even though several campers expressed that they were receiving a nature-based experience, consistent with the perspective that there are multiple realities, one camper felt that he was not able to have a natural experience in the highly developed campground. That camper—a White male from camping group #19 in the highly

developed campground—felt that it was impossible to get a nature-based experience in the highly developed campground. He described what he defined as nature,

The Grindstone campground by definition is almost an artificial construction. But it's certainly different from, from staying in a motel or a cabin. You know, you are right in the woods here, with the trees and stuff. But it's artificial, I mean, you can't get really a natural experience. Natural would probably be, you know, being out in the woods without any gear at all, naked, or something.

Another camper, a White male from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground, spoke about the impacts of age on his perspective of nature-based experiences and highly developed camp grounds. He said,

This type of campground is important. Well, when you get old, you can't get out there to where there ain't no roads. I'm 63 years old, and I can't get on top of them mountains. So this is as close to nature as I can get. We need to have this kind of camping for when people get older... they're not going to be able to do some of these other things. That's good that they've got other things for younger folks to do, but when you get our age, it's nice to have a road to get to a place like this to appreciate it.

Thus, this camper was a reminder of the barriers that come with age and the way that individual realities are shaped by personal experiences.

In summary, developed forest camping experience was described by campers as a combination of what they were doing before and during their camping trip (i.e.,

activities), who they were interacting with during their camping trip (i.e., social interaction), where they were camping (i.e., setting), and what they were feeling while they were there (i.e., psychological states/feelings). The camping experience occurred in stages and sometimes began months before the trip with pre-trip planning. The camping experience emerged over the course of the campers' trips, with emotional highs and lows based upon the influences of the setting (e.g., severe weather) and extraordinary, unique experiences like reaching the top of Mount Rogers and seeing wild ponies for the first time. The camping experience was very social, with campers' defining much of their experience in terms of who they were with. Finally, the camping experience was influenced greatly by the natural environment, particularly the scenic beauty and other aesthetic setting qualities that campers repeatedly mentioned in their interviews. Although not universal, the majority of campers in this study suggested that they were able to get a nature-based experience even in highly developed camp settings.

Table 7: Participants' Expressed 'Salient Aspects of Forest Camping Experiences' Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed)

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>) <i>13 participants; 6 camping groups</i>	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>) <i>25 participants; 12 camping groups</i>	Highly Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>) <i>42 participants; 20 camping groups</i>
<p>Pre Trip Activities (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Scouting' the campground (1) • Campground internet research (1) <p>On-Site Activities (35)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (nature-based) (15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campfire (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building campfire (2) ▪ Watching campfire (4) ○ Fishing (2) ○ Hiking (2) ○ Walking through the forest (2) ○ Gathering wood (1) ○ Swimming in the river (1) ○ Skipping rocks (1) ○ Chopping wood (1) • Activities (social interaction) (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teaching wife about American history and geography (1) ○ Telling stories to his sons (1) ○ Helping daughter (1) 	<p>Pre-Trip Activities (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing for the camping trip (1) <p>On-Site Activities (48)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (nature-based) (28) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campfire (12) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watching campfire (9) ▪ Building campfire (3) ○ Hiking (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hiking (general) (2) ▪ Hiking Mt Rogers Tr. (2) ○ Spending time in nature (2) ○ Fishing (1) ○ Fly fishing (1) ○ Hunting (1) ○ Gathering wood (1) ○ Exploring the creeks (1) ○ Biking Virginia Creeper Trail (1) ○ Playing outside (1) ○ Chopping wood (1) ○ Practicing 'primitive' skills (1) 	<p>Pre-Trip Activities (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-trip planning (2) <p>On-Site Activities (109)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (nature-based) (37) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Campfire (14) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watching campfire (8) ▪ Sitting by the campfire (3) ▪ Building campfire (2) ▪ Keeping campfire going (1) ○ Hiking (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hiking (general) (3) ▪ Hiking Mt. Rogers Tr. (3) ○ Bird-related (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feeding/watching birds (2) ▪ Listening to birds (4) ○ Biking Virginia Creeper Trail (5) ○ Gathering wood (2) ○ 'Tromping through the woods' (1) ○ Walking the trails (2) ○ Spending time at creek (1) ○ Spending time at wading pool (1)

Table 6 (continued)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cooking/Eating (3) ○ Cleaning (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (<u>not requiring</u> technology) (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resting/Relaxing (3) ○ Playing non-electronic games (2) ○ Walking (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (<u>requiring</u> technology) (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listening to music (1) ○ Driving to local towns (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (social interaction) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Talking and playing cards with family (2) ○ Teamwork for campsite set-up (1) • Activities (human/companion animal interaction) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spending time with dog (3) • Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eating (2) ○ Fixing dinner in the rain (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (<u>not requiring</u> technology) (11) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resting/Relaxing (3) ○ Frisbee (2) ○ Football (2) ○ Biking campground roads (2) ○ Reading newspaper (1) ○ Watching grandkids play (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities (social interaction) (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Large family meals (2) ○ Family talking/story-telling (2) ○ Sons fishing with their dad (1) • Activities (human/companion animal interaction) (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking/playing with dogs (3) • Activities involving basic needs (food, water, shelter) (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eating (3) ○ Cooking (3) ○ Making s'mores (2) ○ Cutting and eating watermelon (1) • Activities related to recreation and leisure (<u>not requiring</u> technology) (32) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Resting/Relaxing/Napping (8) ○ Reading (8) ○ Walking (5) ○ Playing cards (3) ○ Kids biking (2) ○ Creating a journal (1) ○ Knitting (1) ○ Structured activities for kids (1) ○ Playing music/guitar/singing (1) ○ Playing basketball (1)
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Table 7 (continued)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities related to recreation and leisure (<u>requiring</u> technology) (22) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Driving to regional destinations (8) ○ Driving to local town (6) ○ Playing electronic games (Game Boy, Sega, Play Station) (4) ○ Watching movies/DVDs (3) ○ Listening to the radio (1)
<p>Social interaction (10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family, spouse, children (5) • Talking (2) • Visiting other campers (1) • Spending time with friends (1) 	<p>Social interaction (18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family, spouse, children (9) • Spending time with friends (5) • Meeting new people (1) • Campers helping one another (1) • Fellowship (1) 	<p>Social interaction (46)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending time with family, spouse, children (32) • Spending time with friends (12) • Meeting new people (1) • Entertaining visiting family members (1) • Creating memories with others (1)
<p>Psychological States / Feelings (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happiness (2) • Peacefulness (1) • Surprise/Concern (1) • Desire for comfort/convenience (1) 	<p>Psychological States / Feelings (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for comfort/convenience (5) • Peacefulness (2) • Frustration (2) • Desire for novelty/new experience (1) • Concern/Fear (1) 	<p>Psychological States / Feelings (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peacefulness (8) • Desire for comfort/convenience (8) • Enjoyment (4) • Misery (2) • Frustration (2) • Concern/fear

Table 7 (continued)

<p>Setting (20)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campground/Campsite (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Privacy (4) ○ Absence of buildings (1) ○ Clean (1) ○ Quiet (1) ○ Port-a-Johns (1) ○ Seclusion (1) ○ Shady (1) • Nature (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weather (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perfect weather (2) ▪ Cool temperatures (1) ▪ Hard rain (1) ○ Insects (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gnat Infestation (1) ▪ Swarms of bugs (1) ○ Listening to owls (1) ○ Trees (1) ○ Quiet (1) ○ Animals (1) 	<p>Setting (32)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campground/Campsite (15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Seclusion (2) ○ Friendliness of other campers (2) ○ Lack of motor homes/RVs (2) ○ Natural setting (2) ○ Privacy (2) ○ Clean (1) ○ Safety (1) ○ Conveniences (1) ○ Family-oriented (1) ○ Primitive/convenient camping (1) • Nature (17) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Scenic beauty (7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beauty (general) (2) ▪ Mountains (2) ▪ Creeks (2) ▪ Wild Horses (1) ▪ Trees (1) ○ Creek (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creek (general) (3) ▪ Listening to creek/sounds of rushing water (2) ○ Weather (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rain (general) (3) ▪ Rain / Lightning storm (1) 	<p>Setting (79)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campground/Campsite (47) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Quiet (6) ○ Privacy (5) ○ Safe place for kids to play (3) ○ Natural/wilderness setting (3) ○ Solitude (2) ○ Campsite layout reduces noise pollution from other groups (2) ○ Friendly campers (2) ○ Access to water (2) ○ Wading pool (2) ○ Wooded/forested campsite (2) ○ Large campsites (1) ○ Distance between campsites (1) ○ Access to electricity (1) ○ Good drinking water (1) ○ Family-oriented (1) ○ Bathhouse (1) ○ Clean campground (1) ○ Lack of big crowds (1) ○ Clean restrooms (1) ○ Shady campsites (1) ○ Friendly campground managers (1) ○ Reservation option (1) ○ Level campsites (1)
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Table 7 (continued)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature (28) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weather (15) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rain (general) (6) ▪ Perfect/great weather (4) ▪ Heavy rain/bad weather (2) ▪ Rain was miserable (2) ○ Scenic beauty (9) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mountains (3) ▪ Forests (3) ▪ Beauty (general) (2) ▪ Pond (1) ○ Birds (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watching birds (3) ▪ Listening to birds (3) ○ Wild ponies (3) ○ Nature's green colors (1) ○ Trees, rhododendron (1) • Camping Mode (<i>see technology discussion earlier in Chapter 4</i>)
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Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping Experiences

Another research question in this study was “What meanings do people assign to modern developed forest camping experiences and what factors influence the construction of meanings?” Expressions of meaning were most often overt and resulted from a specific question about the meaning of developed forest camping. (For example, the probing questions used to elicit information about associated camping meanings included (a) “Has this camping trip been meaningful or important to you?,” (b) “If so, then describe the most meaningful aspects of your camping trip in as much detail as possible.,” and (c) “What were you feeling during those moments?.” Other expressions of meaning were couched within participants’ narratives of their developed forest camping experiences.

The major themes related to the meanings of developed forest camping experiences were:

- restoration,
- family functioning,
- special places,
- self-identity,
- social interaction,
- experiencing nature,
- association of God and nature,
- novelty, and
- the opportunity for children to learn.

Again, although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of participants' responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency represented a greater degree of commonality with regards to the meanings that campers associated with their developed forest camping experiences (Table 8).

Restoration

The most common theme of camping meanings across all three campground types was "restoration." Restoration is a reduction in stress, arousal, or anxiety that results from being removed from one's home environment and being placed in a natural setting. Based upon campers' responses about the associated meanings of their forest camping experiences, restoration included the categories of "rest," "escape," and "recovery."

Rest

The first category of restoration meaning was "rest." For some campers, restoration meant the opportunity for rest and relaxation. As a White male camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground suggested,

We just come over here and just rest. That's about it, just kind of get out and get away, cause you come over [to Ravens Cliff] and it's, you know, always kind of peaceful...just get away to where it's peaceful.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground shared, "To [my husband] and I it's just the peaceful relaxation for us...camping's the only time we get to rest." Getting away and resting did not always feel normal to some campers who were used to staying busy at home. As a White female

camper from camping group 23 in the less developed campground suggested, "If I sit down at home I feel guilty, because I'm letting something else go. So up here you just, there is nothing else. You just relax and let everything else go."

Escape

The second category of restoration meaning was "escape." Campers across all three campground types discussed how camping was restorative because it provided a mechanism for people to "get away" or "escape" some aspect of their home environment. One camper, a White male camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground, described escape meanings in terms of experiencing a new environment.

He said,

Camping is a way to get out and relax. Just sort of come out here and soak up good oxygen. Other aspects of my life are not relaxing. Even though I enjoy my work, it's nice to get out and do something a little different and forget about it for a while.

This camper's perspective of "escaping to" a new environment was uncommon. In most cases, campers seemed to suggest that escape meanings were more related to "getting away" from stressful jobs or responsibilities that they had at work or at home. As a White male camper from camping group #14 in the less developed campground shared,

[Camping's] a way of relaxing, getting away from the stress of everyday life, that's real important, no phones out here, you don't have to worry about it, I think that's the main thing. Escape from working and just everyday rigors.

Campers also described how they wanted to escape technologies like telephones, televisions, cell phones, and pagers. For example, a White male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground described,

I'm on fire and rescue, and there are always pagers going off. Out here there are no pagers and I can really concentrate a lot. Camping is a little time away from the hustles and bustles of everyday life. When you're at work, it's just a push to get everything done...and they want it done now. Camping, there's no time schedule. You don't have to get something completed in ten minutes. I mean, it's just, get away.

Recovery

"Recovery" was the third category of restoration meaning. Several campers, all males, from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds discussed how camping was meaningful because it allowed them not only to escape their home environments but also to physically, mentally, or emotionally recover from various ailments. A White male camper from camping group #17 in the moderately developed campground described how camping was a part of his recovery from cancer.

Last year I had prostate cancer and I had the radioactive seed implants. And then I was pretty weak, so I came up here in August and all I did was mainly sit here and relax. I told my doctor 'Why can't I recover out there in the very pleasant surroundings rather than sitting back in the hot weather down in St. Petersburg in Florida?' Well, I think as you do get older, and this was a fairly meaningful trip because when you get older, and you know... you get to the point where you say, well, hey, this may be the last trip.

Another camper, a White male camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground, expressed how camping helped him recover from his allergies.

I come camping to get out of the dust from working on the farm which I'm allergic to, and to get away from a lot of the pollen. When I'm at home for a few days I get a small respiratory infection and it just gradually gets worse because I won't give up working. Now when I come [to Grindstone] and we're a long ways from any factories, and there's not a great deal of pollen, the respiratory problem goes away in about forty-eight hours, and I'm just much healthier here.

A White male camper from camping group #24 in the moderately developed campground suggested that camping helped his mental state of mind.

Camping, whether by myself or with my friends, allows me to re-energize.

It just energizes me. It gets me back to, it's a center, is what it is, it pulls me back to center. Back to where I should be, you know, everything is right. OK, I'm focused again, I'm back in balance, where I can go back and face everything else that has to be done and know that I can deal with it the way it ought to be dealt with.

Special Places

A second common meaning associated with developed forest camping experiences was "special places." This theme included expressions about the three Mount Rogers campgrounds as special places. In most cases, campgrounds came to be viewed as special places because of family traditions and memories that were closely

associated with them over time. For example, a White male camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground shared,

I would have to say that camping means tradition, here at Grindstone more than anything. Well, [my dad] started bringing us here when we were kids before [Grindstone] was even finished. Hurricane was the beginning for us. We got a lot of stories. We used to be like a bunch of gypsies. We've kept the camping tradition alive, a lot of the other families, they're missing, and passing ways, and everybody goes their separate ways, but we've kept this tradition alive. Coming to Hurricane probably costs more than going to some places, the way you're gonna have your equipment and what have you, but it's part of who we are.

Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground expressed,

It's just kind of a tradition for us to go camping. We heard about it from my dad, cause he would come up through here riding a lot, a long time ago, and then, you know, we started coming over here camping and I don't think we've ever missed a year coming over here. I mean, just him, or if it's me and him, or the kids, the whole family, whatever, you know. About every year, somebody has been here about every year.

According to campers, place-related traditions and stories related were almost always family-related and always developed over a period of many years. As a White male camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground stated,

I had come [to Hurricane] back in the mid-to early 70s when these campsites

were just formed. In fact the other campsite, number six, was the one we actually stayed at when I was a kid and I remember paying like one or two dollars to camp out here. This is where we used to take our vacations. It's amazing how I remember that being a dirt field where we used to play... everything was new. We've got family photographs from all that. To me it's like the memories of growing up, you know, going camping at Mt. Rogers.

A White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground described an important family tradition that evolved around camping.

In the fall we go up on top of the mountain, Pine Mountain, and pick blueberries, that's an annual event for our family here at this particular campsite. When the blueberries are ripe that's usually when my grandson's birthday is, that's an annual event for us, going up on the mountain, picking blueberries and making a cobbler that night, we've been doing it for years.

Family Functioning

"Family functioning" was another common camping meaning associated with developed forest camping experiences by campers in this study. This theme referred to expressions of how developed camping in Mount Rogers positively influenced social interactions among family members. Specifically, campers suggested that camping with a spouse and/or children enhanced family communication and cohesiveness. Family functioning was often catalyzed by the camp setting which provided fewer distractions than campers' home lives. As a White female camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared,

When we're camping there's no TV. We talk more. We talk, sit around and just talk. You communicate a little better....get a little closer maybe. Cause if you're at home, all you do is watch TV...everybody's got their eyes on it. When you're camping you're all in one little tiny box and you get close. Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #37 in the highly developed campground explained,

Camping allows you to eliminate your routine, technology, and all the distractions that there are at home, and I actually think you're much more grounded in an environment like this where you're sitting around talking with people. I mean, how often do you sit around at night conversing with a group of people for four to six hours? I mean it's almost a lost art in terms of, you know, we have such huge agendas. Everybody works, everybody does their thing. I think that this is why we camp. Camping pulls us out of that, that crazy scheduled life...it simplifies everything.

Thus, campers seemed to suggest that "family functioning" meanings were related to escape because campers need to get away from their home environments in order for the family functioning impacts of camping to be realized. As a White male camper from camping group #22 in the highly developed campground stated,

[Camping's] been a family affair for us for years. It's kept our family closer together. Going back to the escape factor, it's hard to get away from it all at your own house. Your job's on your mind, your chores around your home is on your mind. It's there and you're thinking about it. I have a tendency to forget about it when I'm camping...and I focus on

my family.

Self-Identity

Some campers expressed that camping meaning could be found in how the developed forest camping experiences allowed them to express some aspect of their identity. For example, a White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground expressed how camping allowed him to express his identity as an explorer when he shared,

I think there's some element of the camping experience that doesn't have anything to do with your technology or your work, it's just the desire to get out into the woods, I think, I think there's something kind of innate about that...the aspect of exploring, just hike and do things on your own. Why is there any reason to explore? I think a lot of people travel because there is a certain amount of discontent in their existence, either because of work or whatever, and they're trying to find their true identity.

Camping gear and equipment was an outward expression—a symbol—of self-identity related camping meaning. When talking about how camping was meaningful to himself, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground compared his current camping identity with his past camping identity as he shared,

Fishing, bow hunting, and camping used to be huge in my life. They still are, but I don't do it the way that I used to. When I was younger I did it

with a real drive, a real push to get very good, and I dedicated a tremendous amount of time and money to it, I had to have all of the best gear and stuff so that I could be the best....and that's not the case any more. I don't have the same motivation. Camping here reminds me of that part of myself. To kind of regroup and to do this again and start to look towards these things again, a little more fishing, is very important from my standpoint. I don't want to say like a rebirth, but it is an opportunity to kind of drift back and remember....to kind of touch base with who I was before.

Camping gear was central to the camping meanings of camping group #2 in the less developed campground. As the White female camper suggested,

We buy camping equipment all the time. Buying equipment is part of the experience. We find we need something else and we need this or want this or walking around and meeting other campers, you know – oh, they've got this. We might need that too. So that kind of influences us to get other stuff for our trips. This gear allows us to make camping what we want it to be, and to be the type of campers that we want to be.

As these campers suggested, the meaning of the developed forest camping experience could be found in how campers were able to express an aspect of their identity through the camping experience.

Social Interaction

Camping meanings were commonly associated with the social aspects of the developed forest camping experience. This “social interaction” theme was different from the “family functioning” theme of camping meaning in two ways. One, “social

interaction” referred to social-based camping meanings that could be associated with people not in one’s family. Two, the “social interaction” theme did not necessarily include the enhancement of a social relationship. The social interaction theme had two categories: “social interaction with family and friends” and “social interaction with other camping groups.”

Social Interaction with Family and Friends

Campers described that camping was meaningful because it provided the opportunity for social interaction with family and friends. As one White female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground suggested, “Camping is something that you do with your family. Good clean fun. Something to do with people you enjoy being with.” Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #5 in the less developed campground shared,

Camping gives us quality family time, being able to bring the whole family together, instead of everybody scattered every which direction. Just time together. We all get together, brothers and sisters and mother and father and aunts and uncles, and we all just get together and make it a big family thing.

A male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground expressed that the meaning of camping for him was spending time with his grandchildren. He shared,

We’ve got two grandchildren, ages 9 and 6. We’ve brought them up here for several years. Every time they’d be at our house and see our camper they want to know when are they coming back to that place

that had the creek....this is the gathering place and the grandkids even know it. This is our family time.

Social Interaction with Other Camping Groups

Social-based camping meaning was also related to developing and maintaining social relationships with campers from other camping groups. In some cases, social relationships were pre-existing and the associated meaning was found in re-connecting with old friends. As a female camper from camping group #31 in the highly developed campground shared,

I like seeing all the people that were here last year come in. Several couples...it's kind of nice to realize that they're still here, they're coming in...re-connecting with people that you saw last summer. It's always good to see couples come in that you've seen camping over the years.

One of these couple we camped with the whole twelve years that we've been camping at Grindstone.

This reconnection with old friends was a common meaning among older campers in the highly developed campground who had been camping for multiple weeks over many years and had developed close friendships with other campers.

In other cases, campers developed new social relationships with members of other camping groups. A male camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground described how the meaning of camping for him was watching his sons make friends. He said, "I want to give the boys a chance to meet new friends. Last night we had about seven of them, seven or eight kids out here playing, passing balls and everything near our camp site."

Experiencing Nature

As previously described, “nature” was identified as a salient element of developed forest camping experiences. For some campers, “experiencing nature” was also an important associated camping meaning. As described by campers, this meaning could be symbolized by nature’s aesthetic beauty. For example, a white female camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground stated,

Where I work, I’m inside of an office sitting at a computer. We don’t have this kind of scenery there. So when the weekend comes, we’re ready for this.

This is our sanctuary...this gives our camping trip meaning.

Nature-based meanings were also found in features of the natural landscape. As a White female camper from camping group #2 in the less developed campground shared,

I love the wilderness feel here...this feels more wild here because the forest is coming right down to the edge of the river, yes. So it’s not created, you haven’t got paddocks, things like that. So to me that’s wilderness and it’s very meaningful.

Campers often described nature-based meanings with the phrase “getting back to nature,” (e.g., White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground), which is reminiscent of “escape” meanings and the perspective of moving from one’s home environment into a more preferred setting. A White male from camping group #23 in the high developed campground expressed a similar perspective on how camping was meaningful when he shared, “To me camping is getting back to nature, getting back into it and seeing nature first-hand. That’s what I really enjoy about it. That’s why this trip has meaning to me...getting to see things along the trail.”

A White male camper from camping group #15 in the highly developed campground suggested that the nature-based meanings that he associated with camping experiences were important because they helped him to balance his desire for comfort and conveniences in other aspects of his life. He stated,

It's just pleasant to be communing with nature. I love mountain streams and trees. To me the woods is, you're getting back, it's just, it's a good feeling to get back into wilderness. We're kind of a two-timing society in terms of our natural surroundings. We tend to want things too easy, we're too inconvenienced by modern technology. Modern technology is great, I'm a scientist and I've contributed my part to science, but there's a point, you've got to find a nice balance, and this does that. This provides that balance.

Association of God and Nature

Camping meaning was also associated with making a spiritual connection to God through nature. This spiritual connection was attributed to the opportunity that forest camping provided for campers to have more time to think, and was often symbolized and made real through elements of nature that surrounded campers. As a White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground stated,

My first priority was getting in touch with the Lord. You're sitting out here under nature, and even if all of us together do not even mention anything about the Lord, we're still sitting here in our private moments and looking up and saying, Lord, you have a good world. Looking at all these little critters, and that's what it's all about.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #20 in the highly developed campground shared,

Camping out here is just, it's a part of us and we just enjoy it. The woods makes you feel closer to the Lord, sit out, read your Bible in peace, you know. When you're out of the fast life, you know, and you're living a slower life here than if you're working...when you slow down, and you're out in the woods, it just seems like, if you know the Lord, that he's closer to you. I can't explain it, except you think more of the Lord.

The importance of the campfire was suggested earlier in Chapter 4 as a salient element of developed forest camping experiences. One camper, a White male camper from camping group #8 in the moderately developed campground, associated campfires with his spiritual connection to God and how camping was meaningful to him.

I got to have a fire. I mean, to me, I feel closer to the Lord that way than I do anywhere else. I love it. To me, I can be closer to the Lord this way. Being at peace with the Lord and talking to the Lord.

Novelty

Another meaning associated with developed forest camping was "novelty." "Novelty" referred to meaning that arose from experiences that were new or unfamiliar. A White female camper from camping group #11 in the moderately developed campground shared how new experiences were meaningful to her. She said,

I love to camp. I think it's more what you're not doing than what you are doing. I like not having the same old routine as being at home and having to do the same schedule. With camping everything is new and

different instead of the same old stuff. New experiences are important.

For some campers, “novelty” meanings were related to their past outdoor recreation experiences. For example, a White male camper from camping group #7 in the moderately developed campground associated the meaning of his camping trip as the opportunity to find new places to fish. This meaning also seemed to be related to his identity as a fisherman. He shared,

I’m looking for new experiences. It’s almost like finding a balance between what I like to do and what I haven’t done yet. Fishing used to be an unbelievably huge part of my life. And then I slowed down a lot. So for me this particular trip was very much an opportunity to see some new water...some new fishing spots. I miss a lot of what I used to do, and I don’t have opportunities to do it, so it’s a chance to kind of almost, not really regain my past, but experience some of the things I used to experience a little more. Being out and seeing things that are new and different- that’s a big part of the meaning of camping.

A White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground who was camping with her husband and daughter discussed the importance of new, novel experiences. For this camper, “novelty” was an important camping meaning, not in terms of her experience but in terms of the experience that she wanted for her daughter. She stated,

For us it’s just an opportunity for our daughter to have a different kind of experience and she loves it, she has just, it’s so much more appropriate, so much more geared for a child than some of the other kinds of family

things that we've done in the past. Camping is just a more appropriate activity. We don't have to tell her to sit still and be quiet all the time. She can run around if she needs to and play if she needs to, create her own structure, she has time to do what she wants to do on her own little schedule. It's more of an adventure for her. It's so different than what she does every day and it's a chance for her to experience things that, well, a lot of things that are very new, like, we found an inchworm the other night. And I had a chance to show them an inchworm crawling up my finger and let it crawl up their fingers.

Opportunity for Children to Learn

The final camping meaning theme that emerged in this study was the "opportunity for their children to learn." This theme referred to the ways in which campers' kids could develop new knowledge, skills, and an appreciation for nature during the developed forest camping experience. A female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground discussed how the knowledge that her kids learned had made her own camping trip meaningful. She shared,

This camping trip has been meaningful because it's been an educational experience for my kids, in that they've learned to...like we were talking about Leave No Trace. The daddy longlegs, now they're just picking them up and moving them, and when we first got here they would shriek and freak out and they just kind of appreciate nature more and understand how it all works together and I think this camping trip has taught them more about nature and that they're just a part of it and there's a chain to life. We

did this scavenger hunt we learned a lot. We did collect a bunch of leaves that we're gonna go back and look them up and see what they go with, and that's kind of fun, so I think it'll be a big learning experience for them.

Campers also described how teaching their children new skills was the most important meaning of their experience. As a White male camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground suggested,

My kids learn a little bit here and there. [My son] learned how to scale a fish last night and clean it. I taught him. He learned what those fish had been eating. We saw crawdad's in the fish's stomach when we cut them out. He's also learning how to make do with what he's got, try to find something to make things out of to play with.

As this camper suggested, teaching kids how to improvise, how to play, and how to "make due" with something basic was important to some campers. Campers indicated that their kids often had many conveniences at home that were not available when they were camping. This seemed to influence the degree to which teaching their kids was meaningful. A White male camper from camping group #4 in the less developed campground stated,

For me it's been time to show the kids that they don't need a lot of stuff that we have at the house—that they can 'make it' without a lot of conveniences, and they take for granted what they do have. I mean, like, some of the stuff that they consider they have to have, they may get out here and you realize, really you don't need nothing except food, something to drink, and something to keep you warm, that's it.

Another aspect of this camping meaning was that campers wanted their children to be able to survive in the outdoors and to enjoy the outdoors. They expressed the hope that the knowledge, skills, and appreciation for nature that they taught to their children during camping trips would translate into future behaviors. As a White male camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground suggested,

They're using their imaginations more and we feed off that and play along with whatever they're imagining or playing. And you're teaching them how to put up the tent, how to cook, how to clean, we're teaching, always trying to teach them the camping skills. This is very important to me, cause I've camped all my life and he pretty much has too, and we can, a lot of families when we told them we were going camping, they were just, oh, that's so awful. And it's a lot of work to get it all together, but then, you know, once you get there it's really such a great experience I don't even know how to describe it, and I want them to be able to do that as well, growing up with their own families, you know.

Similarly, a female camper from camping group #12 in the moderately developed campground expressed how she hoped that he children would learn survival-type skills when she said,

I think that [camping's] very important because it's very educational. I want the children, when they grow up, to know how to survive if they need to, in some aspects. I mean, this isn't totally rough, but at least they'll know how to start a fire and do that kind of thing, and just, I want them to know about everything, not just sitting in front of the TV again,

because I think that's the worst thing for a child.

In summary, the major themes of camping meanings associated with developed forest camping experiences were: restoration (including rest, escape, and recovery), family functioning, special places (including traditions, memories, and stories), self-identity, social interaction, experiencing nature, association of God and nature, novelty, and the opportunity for children to learn. Restoration was the most commonly expressed meaning across all three campground types. Restoration, place, family functioning, self-identity and experiencing nature themes emerged across all three campground types. Opportunity for children to learn was expressed by several campers in the less developed campground and by one camper in the moderately developed campground. Novelty and association of God and nature were expressed by moderately and highly developed campers.

Table 8: Participants' Forest Camping Meanings Across Three Campground Types

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>) 13 participants; 6 camping groups	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>) 25 participants; 12 camping groups	Highly Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>) 42 participants; 20 camping groups
<p>Restoration (9)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work-related pressures, stress ○ Chores, schedules, responsibilities ○ Television/phones ○ Monotony/boredom • Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Back injury 	<p>Restoration (27)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General relaxation • Escape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work (and related technology) ○ Chores, schedules, responsibilities ○ Television/phones ○ Grown kids • Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stress-relief ○ Cancer ○ Heart condition ○ Problem-solving major life issues 	<p>Restoration (18)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Escape <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chores, schedules, responsibilities ○ Escape work ○ Television/phones/cell phones • Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Camping as therapeutic ○ Opportunity to change your perspective ○ Mental break/physical exercise ○ Respiratory health ○ Achieving "balance"
<p>Opportunity for Children to Learn (6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use imaginations • How to improvise • "Leave No Trace" • Learn about nature • Camping skills • Appreciation for that they have 	<p>Place (13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lengthy history of camping at Hurricane • Hurricane is the "gathering place" • Places like Hurricane important for grandchildren 	<p>Family Functioning (16)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communications (easier to talk to one another) • Quality time • Family members focused on one another • Share common experiences

Table 8 (Continued)

<p>Place (6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of camping at Ravens Cliff • Annual traditions and memories associated with Ravens Cliff • Importance of building/continuing family traditions 	<p>Family Functioning (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with children/other family members with less distractions • Spend time with spouse with less distractions • Having quality conversations that are meaningful 	<p>Social Interaction with Family (12)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family time • Camping as a family-oriented activity
<p>Family Functioning (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kids fight less • Kids are more relaxed and easygoing • Family members communicate better 	<p>Social Interaction with Family/Friends (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time with spouse • Spend time with friends and family • Opportunity for kids to make friends • Spend time with friendly people from other camping grounds • Relationships with camping groups 	<p>Place (8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual traditions and memories associated with Grindstone • Lengthy history w/ developed camping at Grindstone and related meanings
<p>Self-Identity (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hunter/fisherman; provider of food • Exploration 	<p>Experiencing Nature (5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creek • Woods/forests • Mountains • Primitive experience/wilderness 	<p>Experiencing Nature (7)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting back to nature/Coming to nature • Nature appreciation • Watching nature • Mountains
<p>Experiencing Nature (1)</p>	<p>Self-Identity (4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pioneer identity/desire for primitivism • Developing fisherman identity • Freedom- "do what you want to do when you want to do it" 	<p>Self-Identity (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current identity as Grindstone volunteer • Identity as part of the Grindstone motor home camping community • Identity as a builder of electronics and gadgets

Table 8 (Continued)

	<p>Novelty (3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change your perspective with new experiences • Visit new places and try new things 	<p>Association of God and Nature (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Feeling closer to the Lord when in nature
	<p>Association of God and Nature (2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being closer with the Lord 	<p>Novelty (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being adventurous by trying new experiences
	<p>Opportunity for Children to Learn (1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survival skills 	

Life-Context Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping

While some developed forest camping meanings were associated with the on-site experiences during which the interviews were conducted, other meanings were associated with campers' overall lives or were meaningful within the greater context of campers' lives. The fourth research question in this study was, "What meanings do people associate with developed forest camping across the greater context of their lives?" The meanings that campers described as being particularly important within the context of their lives were identified as "life-context meanings" (Table 9).

Expressions of 'life-context meanings' were sometimes overt and resulted from specific questions (or probes) about the meaning of developed forest camping across campers' life-spans and how camping had influenced campers' lives. (For example, the probing questions used to elicit information about life-context meanings included (a) "Has camping been meaningful in the bigger picture or the larger context of your life?," (b) "If so, then describe this meaning in as much detail as possible.," (c) "What positive or negative events/situations have resulted from your camping experiences?," (d) "Would your life be different if you were unable to go camping?," and (e) "If so, then describe how would it be different?").

Other expressions of "life-context meanings" were couched within participants' narratives of their developed forest camping trips and the importance of those trips in their lives. The major themes of "life-context meanings" identified in this study were:

- restoration,
- sharing positive family memories and traditions,
- novelty,

- experiencing and appreciating nature,
- self-reliance,
- self-identity,
- freedom, and
- family functioning.

Again, although these themes were ranked based upon the frequency of participants' responses, themes with a higher frequency were not believed to be any more or less valid (a representation of reality) than themes with a lower frequency. Multiple realities were assumed and were considered to be equally valid. Themes with a higher frequency represented a greater degree of commonality with regards to the life-context meanings that campers associated with their forest camping experiences.

Restoration

The most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was "restoration." As previously described in this chapter, the theme "restoration" referred to a reduction in stress, arousal, or anxiety that resulted from being removed from one's home environment and placed in a natural setting. Three categories of restoration were identified through the analysis: "rest," "escape," and "recovery," and the most commonly expressed category was escape. Camping experiences which occurred across the life-span served a restorative function in peoples' lives—treatment for the stresses associated with day-to-day living. As a White female camper from camping group #18 in the moderately developed campground said,

You get into that groove of work day in and day out, and if you don't get out of that groove, after a while, your work starts to be meaningless...It's

just something that you don't look forward to, it's just day in and day out, work, come home, work, you know, it's good for the mind and the body just to get away, at least once or twice a year and just go camping and just enjoy yourself, forget all the problems that you have at home, and that's what camping does. It just lets you forget all your problems, it relieves your stress. Everyone needs an outlet to be able to run to when things get tough. Camping helps you get back into that groove again.

Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions

The second most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was "sharing positive family memories and traditions." As indicated earlier in this report, traditions were a component of place meanings. In contrast, with regards to life-context meanings, traditions seemed to be less connected with place and more closely associated with social interaction and the importance of passing traditions and memories along to younger members of one's family. When discussing the life-context meanings associated with camping, many campers reflected on how they grew up with camping and how camping became a tradition in their families. For example, a White female camper from camping group #3 in the less developed campground shared,

[Ravens Cliff] is where we first started camping...my first camping experience. And then we started with the children and then basically our children grew up coming over here, and now we've got three grandchildren and, you know, the middle grandchild, he loves to come over here. And you know, it's just, it's just something like it's part of

our life during the summer...twenty-two years if not longer. You know, something that happens, you know, just like a birthday.

Memories were created around positive camping experiences and these memories stayed salient as campers aged. As a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground suggested,

There's just wonderful memories, you know, of camping and growing up and stuff. Real family experiences, you know. Dad taught us, you know, all the basics...and walking around these mountains, especially Mt. Rogers...that's kind of where I learned about the outdoors. I was able to do so many things, it opens up a whole other world. I grew up in Philly, but when we came back here camping every year, we had two weeks to sit around and play. And these are, you know, it's just wonderful memories, and I mean, when I look back at the photographs, and you know, and you say, my gosh, that was something!

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #23 in the highly developed campground shared,

When I started camping, we were camping in the back of a pickup truck...or sometimes a tent. And our daughters came with us so many years ago doing the same thing, but they didn't like camping quite as much as mom and dad. So it's, with my wife and myself it's been an evolution, been a real lifetime experience. And I wouldn't trade it for anything, wouldn't trade it. We always talk about all the memories, you know, that have built up over the years. I wouldn't give this up.

For several campers, life-context meanings were associated with the importance of passing down memories of unique, positive experiences to their children. As a White male camper from camping group #4 in the less developed campground stated,

I think camping just adds one more family life experience to what we intend to provide in the future to the kids. They have great memories of being outdoors and experiencing nature and so I think to me at least providing another life experience that they can remember and look back because as they get older they reflect more on those and remember those experiences and look forward to going again and just keep going with that. We have great memories of camping with our folks and families as kids, and want them to have that too. I think that's important.

Another White male camper who was camping with his son in the moderately developed campground shared the relevance of watching a falling star with his son. This camper from camping group #14 shared,

Camping is about family time...I really think, you know, my son's ten years old, I'd like to get him doing stuff with us... I want to instill some things in him, and I want him to be able to, I want him to take his kids camping and do the things that we did. I want him to learn what we're doing and, you know, try to teach him some things. We were watching a falling star, you know, I told him how the longer you sit in the dark the better you can see, stars get brighter. You know, we stared at one spot and we saw one good star the other night just in about five or ten minutes out there we saw one falling star.

Novelty

The third most common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types was “novelty.” Novelty was another meaning that was not only associated with the on-site experience but was also related to the greater context of campers’ lives. As previously described, the theme “novelty” referred to meaning that arose from experiences that were new or unfamiliar. In terms of life-context meanings, novelty referred to the opportunity to engage in unique experience in unique settings through developed forest camping. As a White female camper from camping group #15 in the moderately developed campground explained,

[Camping’s] something that I like to do often...every since I was young, so that I can enjoy going to places and seeing places, wilderness places, and just getting away from the so-called civilized world. Everything is so new to me out here.

Similarly, a White male camper from camping group #36 in the highly developed campground also expressed importance of seeing new places when he shared,

I just love to camp. If I live long enough, I’m not going to say I’ll do it full time but I want to, when I retire, I want to do a lot more, maybe even months at a time. I just love to see new places. I know [Grindstone] isn’t a new campground, cause I’ve been here many times, but point me down the road and I’ll go. I guarantee that I’ll see something that I haven’t seen before.

A White female camper from camping group #34 from the highly developed campground described how she considered new camping experiences to be particularly special. She said,

[Camping]'s got greater meaning. I mean, each time we learn a little bit something special and something new each time. It's just a little something special that we take back home with us, something that we didn't see or do the year before.

Novelty as a life-context meaning was also associated with new types of recreational activities that campers could experience through developed forest camping. A White female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground explained the difference between developed forest camping and family vacations.

Camping is so different than really anything that you do. We've found that sometimes our hotel experience...wasn't always really filling the bill. And this is such a different type of vacation. I think you experience more in this setup....and get much more out of it than on other types of trips. This is just so vast, and like I say, this puts me in the game as opposed to other types of trips where you just show up and are entertained. This actually, I feel like so much more of a participant because there's typically much more to do in these environments. I mean, you know, from the standpoint of hiking, biking, you know, all the things there are to do in the mountains. We find more with camping environments where we can actually participate in these activities, things that we can't normally do.

According to this camper, developed forest camping provided her family with new, active experiences as opposed to passive, entertainment-based experiences that were usually found in a non-camping vacation.

Experiencing and Appreciating Nature

For some campers, the life-context meanings of developed forest camping experiences were found in the natural setting and the way in which campers developed a greater appreciation for nature through developed forest camping experiences. Thus, “experiencing and appreciating nature” was another common theme of life-context meaning across all three campground types.

Experiencing nature-based settings across one’s lifetime was an aspect of this theme. A White female camper from camping group #1 in the less developed campground shared that “just getting out each year and seeing wild things is important.” Similarly, a White female camper from camping group #13 in the moderately developed campground shared “Just being able to, to, you know, get into the woods...I think is very important. For me it seems like it’s necessary to do that from time to time...to be outside and in a more natural, wild environment. It’s been very important for me to take my annual trip.” Another White female camper from camping group #26 in the highly developed campground expressed, “Learning to appreciate what needs to be appreciated by this environment, for me, is just being in the forest instead of having to be in a mall or dense urban area. Just being here.”

A White female camper from camping group #6 in the less developed campground explained how participation in camping influenced her appreciation for nature and her desire to protect natural areas. She said,

[Camping] continues to reinforce your appreciation of the outdoors, and nature, and the beauty that surrounds it, more so than taking a walk at your neighborhood park, it's a natural setting and I think it continues to provide a level of respect in that by experiencing it you gain more respect for nature and the outdoors to protect it and preserve it and hope these types of areas and places remain as they are for the most part.

The "experiencing and appreciating nature" theme of life-context meaning was related to the "restoration" theme in that campers had to get way from home in order to experience and appreciate a more nature-based environment. A White male camper from camping group #27 in the highly developed campground explained how his appreciation for nature was dependent upon leaving his day-to-day environment. He shared,

Everybody's like in the hustle bustle of work, their livelihood, you know, they don't, they don't slow down a lot of times to respect or to listen to the birds sing or be amazed when a hummingbird'll fly right up to your tent when you've got a feeder hanging there, you know, I mean, that's things you just don't pay attention to when you're in your busy life.

Experiencing and appreciation nature was an important life-context meaning for older campers who were not sure how many more years that they would be able to go camping. As a White male camper from camping group #30 in the highly developed campground described,

To appreciate something like all this in nature I believe in a lot of cases is a humbling experience. To me personally, that is, this is where my heart is, out in the open, God's beauty. You can never get tired of it. And every

time I come I enjoy it a little bit more 'cause I know my time here is shorter than it's ever been, and I appreciate it more. I don't know how many more years I may be able to go camping out here.

Self-Reliance

The theme "self-reliance" was an emergent life-context meaning for female campers in the less-developed campground and was not found in the responses of male or female campers in the other campground types. These women expressed how camping had helped them to improvise, be creative, and to take care of themselves. For example, a camper from camping group #2 said,

My experience being outdoors while camping has helped me not to be scared of anything. It has clearly helped me through many problems. I had been leading an eco-tour and the bus broke down in the middle of nowhere. So I had 17 people stuck in the bush who, some of these people had never ever been in the bush in their life before, and so, you know, I was just able to be calm and deal with the situation, we had the trailer, there's the food and I was able to get food and wine out, and wine and dined them out in the middle of this back bush, and we didn't have any light. So I got them organized to get a fire going. So, I think probably for me it's made me the person I am. I think I'm probably a little more versatile, I suppose, would be the word. I mean, I'm prepared to rough it, even if I have to sleep on the ground. I could whip up a meal, even if we couldn't get the gas working, I could whip up a meal, and I think I can, I'm just more able to deal with any situation that comes along.

A camper from camping group #1 expressed a similar comment about the meaning of camping in her life. She said,

By going camping all my life I learned to improvise, make do with what I got. Creative, be creative. I didn't bring a lot of stuff to cook in, we just...you learn how to improvise, do with what you got...in terms of cooking and setting up your campsite.

Self-Identity

The theme "self-identity" was an emergent life-context meaning for male campers in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. These men expressed that their identity had been shaped by a lifetime of camping experiences. For example, a White male camper from camping group #33 in the highly developed campground shared,

Camping is a part, I guess, of me, because I'm an outdoorsman, I like to hunt, I like to fish, I like camping, walking, I like picking up rocks and looking at rocks. It's just part of me, I guess...part of who I am. Now some people, that's not part of them, there's other things that are part of them. I don't know if it's the right terminology, but camping and being outdoors, that's part of my life.

Thus, the life-context meaning for this camper was found in the degree to which camping was representative of his self-identity and how camping allowed him to express or connect with that particular identity over the course of his life.

Freedom

"Freedom" was an emergent theme of life-context meaning for campers from the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. This theme represented campers'

expressions of being able to do whatever they wanted to do during their camping experiences, and the importance of having this type of freedom in their lives. As a White male camper from camping group #10 in the moderately developed campground stated,

The most important thing about camping in my life is just knowing that it's there—knowing the campground is there, if next weekend I decide to come back up here, I mean, that's the most important thing. And, which I have talked about coming back up again next weekend, in the tent, and just knowing the ability to, if I want to go, to go for it.

Another male camper from camping group #21 in the highly developed campground described the freedom that he found through the use of his motor home. He said,

You've seen the commercial I'm sure where they're selling RVs or something like that, and they say the best feature is the fireplace. Well, it's nice to have an RV where you can change scenery every week if you want to. One week you could be in the mountains, next week you could be like us, we go down to Pigeon Forge. You can go where you want to go and do what you want to do.

Freedom was also associated with choices and the lack of scheduling during camping. A White female camper from camping group #32 in the highly developed campground expressed,

When you're home, most Americans now have a schedule. When you're up here camping you don't have a schedule. You kind of come and go and you don't have to eat breakfast at 7:00, you know, you can eat at 8:00 or 9:00, you can sit by the fire, you can just leave the dishes on the

table and go sit around the campfire, go walk on the trail for an hour and then come back and do dishes. When you're on a schedule, it's just that, you're on a schedule. You gotta get this done because at 9:00 you gotta have this done, and at 11:00 you gotta be here. And that's one of the good things about camping, you're not really on a schedule. It's just, things just sort of fall in place. Everybody kind of gets to do their thing, which is good cause everybody don't like what I like, and a lot of people wouldn't like to walk that trail for an hour, and maybe just pick out a spot where they can see good, and sit down there with a pair of binoculars and hope they see a deer, or a raccoon, or whatever, come by. Some people like to ride bicycles. And everybody gets to do something different. We need to have this...we need to have this every year.

Family Functioning

"Family functioning" was identified earlier in this chapter as an emergent theme of camping meaning that MRNRA campers associated with their on-site experiences. This theme was a reference to how developed camping positively influenced social interaction and cohesiveness among family members. For some campers, "family functioning" was also a life-context meaning. For example, a White female camper from camping group #24 in the highly developed campground shared that her family "is a little closer with one another" each year because of their annual camping trip. For this camper, family functioning meaning was related to the sharing of experiences and stories. As she described,

Because we've been together for a week in such small confines, and then

just kind of, it lingers over once you get back home, and you can talk about what you did, you know, your experiences, share the fishing and the stories and how big the fish was, how many millipedes you found on the trail. You share what you did and...your fun parts was and what you're looking forward to next year. This kind of closeness happens every year.

Similarly, another camper mentioned closeness as she described the life-context meanings of camping for her family. This female camper from camping group #38 in the highly developed campground said,

Camping is important in our lives because of closeness with our family, you know, spending time together. The world is such a rat race right now, everybody's going opposite ways, everybody's running wild. But camping together...is what builds a strong family. And that is what's gonna build strong relationships with my kids' families when they grow up, to me.

And my kids have been able to spend quality time with their dad...

In summary, the major themes of life-context meanings associated with developed camping experiences were: restoration; sharing positive family memories and traditions; novelty; experiencing and appreciating nature; self-reliance; self-identity, freedom, and family functioning. Restoration, "sharing positive family memories and traditions," novelty, and "experiencing and appreciating nature" were expressed by campers across all three campground types. Self-reliance was expressed only by less developed campers. Self-identity and freedom were expressed only by campers in the moderately and highly developed campground, and family functioning was only expressed by campers in the highly developed campground.

Table 9: Participants' Life-Context Meanings Associated with Developed Forest Camping Across Three Campground Types (Less Developed, Moderately Developed, and Highly Developed)

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>) <i>13 participants; 6 camping groups</i>	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>) <i>25 participants; 12 camping groups</i>	Highly Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>) <i>42 participants; 20 camping groups</i>
Restoration (5)	Restoration (5)	Restoration (4)
Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (5)	Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (4)	Sharing Positive Family Memories and Traditions (3)
Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (3)	Freedom (1)	Novelty (3)
Self-Reliance (3)	Self-Identity (1)	Family Functioning (2)
Novelty (2)	Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (1)	Experiencing and Appreciating Nature (2)
	Novelty (1)	Freedom (2)
		Self-Identity (1)

Evaluations of Mount Rogers National Recreation Area Management

The final question asked in this study involved campers' perceptions of management and their recommendations for how management could improve their on-site forest camping experience. Table 10 summarizes participants' responses related to this question.

In the less developed campground, there was concern that the USDA Forest Service would upgrade the campground and that the primitive nature of the campground would be lost. A female camper shared,

The camp sites [in Ravens Cliff] are beautifully maintained. I don't think there's anything they could do to improve them. I think they're the best ones we've had. And I wouldn't like them to be, I wouldn't like to be any more developed. Keep them primitive.

Similarly, a male camper stated,

Unfortunately, probably, the trend is the other way, to develop. I mean, there's probably a huge demand on forestry or state parks or whatever to, you know, bring the standards up, and people are apparently happy to pay for it. Too bad, far as I'm concerned. I like these camp grounds the way that they are.

There were also safety concerns at this campground related to the broken water pump, which was not indicated in any way at the campground entrance. Every camping group mentioned a concern about water. For example, a female camper expressed,

They should post a sign at the entrance that says that the handle is broken, and that the water doesn't work. And my son walked up there

and said, well it's broke. And here we are thinking somebody broke the handle off. It gets a person's brain going on what kind of people camping here. It would just help us be more prepared, like if we need water, then we needed to bring us a jug or something. That way we can keep water around in case the fire gets out of control.

Finally, the campers at this campground were concerned about the management of the campground and felt a stronger management presence was needed. A male camper shared,

I know they can't keep the bathrooms as clean as they want to all the time, but we've come over here sometimes and they have been filthy. It's going downhill, Ravens Cliff is. The tent pads are in bad shape... and now neither pump works. When we first started coming over here they would come around every year and they would work on the tent pads, maybe put more gravel in them, and all, but it just seems like they're not keeping up with the tent pads and everything the way they used to. It just seems like they've let it slip...

In the moderately developed campground, a majority of the participants described a desire for additional amenities and/or services, including a pay phone, electric and water hookups, firewood provided at the campsite, additional parking, and additional bathhouse items. The most-often stated preference was for an on-site pay phone. As a female camper stated,

The one thing probably that [Hurricane] would need here would be like a pay phone system somewhere close...for emergencies. In case of an

emergency. We have had, the highway patrol came and got us one time because we had a family emergency, a medical emergency. Whereas if there had been a phone, maybe even a pay phone, we could have gotten word somehow or other, maybe. It would be the one thing that I would think that would be most beneficial.

Some campers in this campground felt that management was doing a good job. As a male camper stated, "I think [the Forest Service] does a very good job, and it's been that way over the years." For other campers, campground management was good because of security. A female camper shared,

A safe campground is important. I like the managers and the hosts, they keep up with who comes and goes. They do a great job. There's not a lot of bad things going on, our children can walk around on the roads and not worry about somebody doing anything to them. You don't have to lock your camper if you don't want to. There's nothing ever bothered. It's safe for [our grandkids] to be here. The host makes sure that it's safe for them here.

But campers did express concern regarding the lack of a reservation system. In fact some campers felt that a real lack of equal opportunity was created by campers who abused the system. A female camper stated,

You should have a reservation system here. Let people rent the [campsites] ahead of time, if they want to pay their money. If they don't show up, fine, that tent space goes empty, if people don't show up. But y'all don't let them do that, and see, we traveled 14 hours and [my friend] come and tried to rent a tent space and y'all wouldn't let

her. So I think that, y'all really need to check on that, because, you know, when somebody comes so far to come to someplace, they should have a place to come to. When [my friend] came out here and she said, I've got company coming in from a 14-hours out, I think they should have took her money and gave her a tent space.

Concurrent with perceptions expressed by campers in the less developed campground, campers in this campground expressed that they wanted Hurricane to remain open and that they did not want Hurricane to be developed any further. As a male camper suggested,

[Management] should cut back from always, you know, trying to modernize it, you know, like they're doing with Grindstone." I would be pissed if [Hurricane] was modernized. I understand that they need to pave a couple of the campsites for handicapped people and stuff, which is a necessity, but gosh, keep the bulk of them as natural as they can, you know...and just do the fire rings. Nothing has to be, don't go overboard, you don't have to put a lot of money into it."

A female camper suggested that with increased development came decreased campground security. She stated,

We don't want all of the campgrounds around here to be too developed, because then you would have more and more riffraff back, and you wouldn't be back to nature, and that sort of thing. It would be more like you was at home, outside in your camper.

In the highly developed campground, many campers expressed that management was doing a good job managing the campground and providing them with the type of camping experience that they desired. Specifically, campers mentioned that Grindstone had good managers, clean campground, safe/secure campground, and friendly/helpful managers and hosts.

A majority of the campers in the highly developed campground expressed how pleased they were with the campground managers. As a male camper shared, Grindstone has got some of the best people working in here that they've ever had. We've been coming here, like I say, for all these years, and they've got the best crew in here now they've ever had. They're the most knowledgeable, the most conscientious, and friendly of anybody that I've ever been around. It'll be a sad day when Bob and Jo Ann can't come back and be their hosts because I don't think anybody can replace them.

A male camper shared,

The management of Grindstone is great. You've got good management. I don't think [Grindstone] could be improved here. I mean, you're left alone, do what you want to do, I mean, no stringent regulations, you know, good hosts, good managers, to me the best managers here of anywhere I've ever been.

Campers in this campground were also pleased with how clean the Grindstone campground was during their visit. A female camper stated,

The bathrooms [at Grindstone] were clean. That's important to us, to have a clean bathroom and hot water for the shower. That was important.

And those things were all there. The bathrooms are cleaned every morning because when we've gone in there the trash has been emptied and you can tell they've been cleaned.

A similar comment was expressed by a male camper,

They've got [Grindstone] fixed up right. And they keep it nice. The campsites are kept up nice, that's what we talked about some of the other parks we went to, with all that rain it would have been nothing but mud. But this is, they've got it all graveled and fixed nice, and that prevents that, it dried out real quick, and they keep the bathrooms clean up here, so they're far, far ahead of some of the state parks.

A safe and secure campground was third aspect of the highly developed campground that participants mentioned. For example, a male camper shared,

I feel like [Grindstone] is one of the safest places there is. You don't see parties, the wild beer parties out here, kids carousing around, and I'm not, you know, against beer parties, there's nothing wrong with it, but it don't need to be around a family-type atmosphere and I think this is a family atmosphere. All the years we've been camping out we've very seldom have been bothered by neighbors or wild parties, loud – I mean, everybody seems to respect quiet hours...I like that. And [the managers] seem to enforce it.

Several of the campers in the highly developed campground expressed that they wanted additional amenities and services. The most commonly expressed amenities and services that were desired included the opportunity to purchase wood, electric/water hookups, benches along the sides of the roads, trash pick-up, cellular phone service, additional showers in the bathhouse, additional light in the bathhouse, and adjustable temperature knobs on the showers in the bathhouse.

Registration for the Grindstone Campground was only possible through an on-line reservation system. A few campers in this study were very pleased with the on-line reservation system for Grindstone. For example, a male camper stated,

I like the ability to be able to make your reservations, I like that. And your site selected. Because it's gonna get more popular. That's a good thing to be able to do. Because everyone then, with the exception of the staff and the hosts, are on the same plane. You can use the system, you can make your reservations on line or by phone, or you could come up here and take your chances. So I like that ability. And the \$9 per reservation fee, you know, I don't like it, but if that's what it takes to be able to know which site I'm going to be sitting on, then I guess it's worth it.

In contrast, one camper was displeased with the on-line reservation. She shared,

We don't like how Reserve America is used to book camp sites. For one thing, Reserve America charges, and they just seemed to be kind of impersonal with our dealings with them. Everyone that comes [camping] up here know the area. And when you call Reserve America, they're somewhere else and they have not a clue. There is a fee to reserve the

sites, and, which I'm not opposed to a fee, I'd like to know a little information on what that fee covers, or what they use that fee for. And then there's the way that [Grindstone] holds the sites. When you pull it up on the computer, which I have a computer at home, oh, just like the whole page of camp sites will say, not available, not available, not available. And then, most of the time we don't reserve, we just take our chances, and we drive up here and we think well, if we can't get in here, we'll go stay in another campground down the road because all of them's beautiful. They're all beautiful. But I just, I don't like that Reserve America stuff. I just don't like it. I would rather be able to call in out here at the main gate and talk to one of the hosts that I know and say, you know, I'd like to reserve site 100 or site 99, it's just a more personal.

At some point during the last decade, the USDA Forest Service turned over the management of the Grindstone Campground to Cradle of Forestry in America, a private not-for-profit concession. Several campers expressed a perception that the Grindstone Campground was managed better by the Cradle of Forestry than it was by the Forest Service. For example, a male camper described,

As far as time and labor, [the Cradle of Forestry] does a better job with the personnel than the Forest Service does. When the Forest Service was managing Grindstone, you would have a water line break, it may be 3 months. Somebody's out there piddling at it every week or 2, but it doesn't get fixed. But they just disconnect it and cover up the hole. That was what was happening here over 10 years ago. And when the

Cradle took over in what, 92? All of that changed. They started getting things repaired. And I don't know whether it was that the Forest Service didn't know how to do it, or they just didn't have the manpower, or the management.

A female camper talked about how the Cradle of Forestry's management of Grindstone made the campground safer for recreationists. She stated,

When the Forest Service managed Grindstone, we'd be afraid to go to the restroom because partiers would be out in the middle of the street urinating or whatever. And from the standpoint of this campground under the Cradle, we just feel safer.

Table 10: Themes Related to “Recommendations for MRNRA Management” as Identified by Developed Forest Campers from Raven Cliff, Hurricane, and Grindstone Campgrounds

Less Developed (<i>Ravens Cliff</i>)(n=12)	Moderately Developed (<i>Hurricane</i>)(n=25)	Highly-Developed (<i>Grindstone</i>)(n=42)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep Ravens Cliff in its current primitive state with no additional amenities (5) • Should have posted sign about broken water-pump (3) • Ravens Cliff needs better upkeep and maintenance (2) • Raven Cliff facilities have been abused (1) • Evidence of horses where horses are not allowed (1) • Management needs to patrol RC to ensure campers are following posted rules (1) • Management is doing a good job with campground maintenance (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add additional amenities/services (10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Phone (5) ○ Electric/water hookups (2) ○ Wood at campsites (1) ○ More parking (1) ○ Mirror and paper towels in ladies’ bathroom (1) • Management is doing a good job (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safe/secure campground (2) ○ General (2) ○ Maintenance (1) • Reservation System (4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reservation system desired (2) ○ Need better enforcement (1) ○ Reservation system not desired (1) • Keep Hurricane in its current state with no additional amenities (3) • Keep Hurricane open (2) • Campground upgrades have been good (2) • Cut back limbs to increase sunlight in campgrounds (1) • Hosts’ golf-cart is loud and disturbing (1) • Widen the dirt roads (1) • Build barriers between campsites and road (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management doing a good job (19) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Good managers (6) ○ Clean (5) ○ Safe/secure (4) ○ Helpful/friendly managers (3) ○ Friendly hosts (1) • Add additional amenities/services (8) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sell wood (1) ○ Electric/water hookups (1) ○ Build benches (1) ○ Trash pick-up (1) ○ Cellular phone service (1) ○ More showers (1) ○ More light in the bathhouses (1) ○ Need to be able to adjust the hot-water shower temp (1) • Reservation System (5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Keep reservation system (3) ○ Reservation system not desired (1) ○ Reservation system reduces access (1) • Grindstone managed better by C.O.F. than by the Forest Service (4) • Widen the dirt roads (2) • Amenities shouldn’t be added at the cost of forests (2) • Return to single host system (1) • Charge a dog fee (1)

CONCLUSIONS

Study Findings

Technology and the Modern Developed Forest Camping Experience

Technology influenced each salient aspect of developed forest camping experiences. For example, some activities required the use of technology (e.g., driving to a local destination, playing a hand-held video game, using specialized fly-fishing equipment). Although some camping activities did not require technology (e.g., reading, walking, etc.) and thus some campers experienced developed forest camping with very little use of technology, the vast majority of campers in this study used a variety of technologies during their camping experiences. In some cases the setting itself was altered by camping mode technology, particular for moderately and highly developed campers. Some campers' emotional states were also influenced by technology and whether or not they were achieving desired levels of comfort which were often dependent upon the use of technology (i.e., television, inflatable mattress, portable shower).

Technology use was pervasive across the developed forest camping experience, in terms of the camping modes that campers used for camping, in terms of the gear and equipment that they used for activities and for conveniences, and in terms of the electronics that they used for entertainment. The participants in this study, generally speaking, used one form of technology (auto-based camping modes) to escape another form of technology (i.e., phones, televisions, cell-phones, etc.) and once they entered a nature-based environment, many of them began to use other technologies to maintain a semblance of comfort and familiarity that they associated with the setting from which

they hoped to escape. This technology was often sophisticated (e.g., DVD players and satellite dishes) and very much valued by the campers who had access to electricity.

In 1965, Gregerson published a unique article titled *Campurbia* in which he discussed the suburban nature of developed campgrounds in Michigan's State Parks. Gregerson noted that "people not only don't seem to want to get away from it all—they take it with them. Electric frying pans, irons, TV sets, and other electrical appliances are standard equipment with many campers" (p. 20). The same seemed to be true for campers in the MRNRA.

Campers' perceptions of technology seemed to depend upon whether or not the technology was desired or undesired, which also seemed to relate to the restorative meanings associated with developed forest camping. Campers in this study sought to escape from the undesired elements of technology which were associated with work, responsibility, and a distraction from more leisurely pursuits. However, desired technologies—those associated with comforts, conveniences, and entertainment—were very much enjoyed and utilized by many, but not all, of campers in this study. Thus, the use of technology and camping equipment ultimately seemed to revolve around perceptions of comfort and convenience. Campers seemed to assess the level of comfort and convenience that they expected and made adjustments in their use of technology and camping gear to achieve their desired levels. Thus, a camper who wanted to escape technology at home (i.e., television, phones, etc.) may have turned to the use of similar technologies when boredom or bad weather made camping less comfortable than desired.

Campers in this study, even those who had the greatest access to technology and were the most common users of technology, stated that they were able to have a nature-

based experience, by focusing on natural elements of their surroundings rather than the non-natural elements. But perhaps it is more than just a matter of attention. Rivers (2003), in describing the nature-technology relationship, suggested that people no longer perceive nature as self-revealing, but rather need technological intervention to help reveal nature's essence. Thus, some of the campers in this study, particularly those campers who required technology in order to have a 'camping experience,' may have constructed a perspective of nature that is very inclusive of technology and human-made environmental elements.

Rivers has also suggested that "simpler (traditional) technologies perceived humans as passive and nature as active, but modern technologies perceives humans as active and nature as passive" (p. 405). Perhaps the relationship between human, technology, and nature continues to be modified within developed forest camping settings, in that nature is increasingly viewed as passive and mysterious and some campers are increasingly looking towards technology in order to successfully interface with nature. Turner (2002) has noted that modern backpackers increasingly use more and more modern technology (seemingly non-nature) to get back to nature. In other words, these recreationists take a "step back" to take a "step forward." When compared to dispersed-setting or backcountry campers, developed forest campers may not be as compelled to purchase the latest high-tech camping gear. The Gore-Tex fabrics and other modern gear technologies are not as necessary because of the comfort and protections (insulation) provided by the pop-ups, campers, and motor homes. But for an American population, which is becoming accustomed to particular levels of insular comforts associated with suburban and urban life, there may be a particularly strong motivation to

use technology to make “spending time in nature” more accessible to those who find it difficult to give up the comforts of home.

With regards to camping mode, the participants in this study expressed the importance of comfort and conveniences associated with age, health, and financial means. This “transitioning” from tent-camping, to a pop-up, to a camper, and finally to a motor-home was seen by many developed forest campers as a natural progression and an inevitable aspect of developed camping. In contrast, in 1967, Burch and Wenger studied road-side campers and found that “there is a strong possibility that campers tend to shift from one camping style to another during their life cycle and that today’s younger roadside campers are likely to prefer back-country camping later in their lives” (p. 24). Although comparing road-side campers and developed campers is not entirely like comparing apples and apples, this points to a difference that may have occurred over the last forty years. Campers in this study indicated that as campers get older, they prefer more developed camping modes. As the American population ages and confronts age-associated health problems, the results of this study related to “transitioning” might suggest that the number of tent-campers using developed forest campgrounds may decline and the number of campers using other types of camping modes (i.e., pop-ups, campers, and motor home) may increase.

Restorative Meanings of Developed Forest Camping Experiences

“Restoration,” which included the categories of rest, escape, and recovery, was one of the most commonly expressed meanings of developed forest camping experiences. The importance of this meaning was not surprising, given that themes of escape and restoration have been intertwined with the history of auto-based camping (Sutter, 2002)

and nature-based recreation (Knopf, 1987), and the importance of camping for rest and escape has been well documented in previous camping studies.

Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) have proposed that people are restored in natural environments because they escape from their usual settings and they become fascinated by stimulation in the natural environment that takes their mind off of their day-to-day problems. In contrast, Ulrich (1983) suggested that people want to escape from unwanted arousal. This study supported both models of the restorative nature of outdoor recreation experiences. Although the responses of developed forest campers from the MRNRA suggests support for the Kaplans' view of escape as promoting a sense of being away, as evidenced by the novelty meanings and the importance of new experiences, there is more commonality in campers' responses relative to Ulrich's view of restoration. Campers in this study expressed that camping was restorative because it allowed them to get away from telephones, televisions, cell-phones, and other unwanted, stressful sources of arousal and stimulation. These responses seem to support Ulrich's position that nature has a calming effect because it is a non-taxing stimulus that elicits positive emotions and blocks negative emotions (Hartig, Mang, & Evans, 1991).

The restorative meanings associated with developed forest camping experiences and the importance of escape for campers in this study provide additional support for the many studies, from across the last forty years, which have reported the nature of outdoor recreation and leisure as an escape (Burch, 1965; Shaw et al., 2002). With regards to camping studies, the importance of escape in this study supports Burch's (1965) findings that family camping groups wanted to leave behind their daily commitments. However, this study differs somewhat from Patterson, Williams, & Scherl's (1994) study in that

their participants related escape to attention (i.e., fascinating stimuli), convenience (i.e., escaping civilization's conveniences), and safety (i.e., isolation and security). With the exception of attention (which was a component of novelty meanings in this study), convenience and safety were not commonly expressed themes of camping meanings. (Note: Convenience was important to campers in this study, but not in the same way that it was to the participants in Patterson et al.'s study. In their study, participants wanted to escape conveniences that they associated with civilization. In this study, campers sought conveniences that were closely associated with civilization.)

The results of this study add to the considerable body of research that suggests that natural environments are a context for restoration. Knopf (1987) suggested that "nature serves as a haven for restoration" and that people are driven to natural settings in an effort to cope with unsatisfactory life situations. In other words, people go camping in the outdoors to leave behind a certain state of affairs (p. 802). Hartig et al (1991) found that restoration associated with natural settings was stronger than restoration in non-natural settings. Hartig and his colleagues posed an important question "Can environments be configured so that people can proactively withstand the demands of contemporary society?"

The results of this study provide at least some evidence to suggest that developed forest campgrounds might be configured to enhance restoration. Based upon the responses of campers in this study, the developed forest campgrounds in the MRNRA were *accessible*, both in terms of location and in terms of amenities. Developed campgrounds provided *fascination* (e.g., seeing wild ponies on Mount Rogers, watching the rushing water of Cripple Creek) and a *reprieve from unwanted stimuli* while

providing exposure to new stimuli (e.g., removal from the stimulation caused by phones and cell phones and the opportunity for stimulation from hiking and from watching a campfire). Thus, it might be possible to purposely enhance the restorative qualities of developed forest campgrounds.

Developed Forest Camping as a Nature-Based Experience

Researchers in the 1960s and 1970s studied developed camping and found that social resources and social experiences were more important than natural resources and nature-based experiences (Etzkorn, 1964; Clark, Hendee, & Campbell, 1969). As Hendee and Campbell noted, “few visitors engaged in activities that were dependent upon the natural environment or displayed any concern for the flora, fauna, geology, or natural history of the area” (p. 15). However, in this study, nature was important. The importance of nature for developed forest camping can be seen throughout the results in this study. Nature and nature-based activities were two of the salient elements of developed forest camping experiences, “experiencing nature” was an associated meaning, and developing an “appreciation for nature” was a life-context meaning.

With the exception of the White male camper from camping group #19 in the highly developed campground, developed forest campers expressed that they did receive nature-based experiences, regardless of their camping mode. Campers looked to the outdoor context as a novel, quiet context for personal restoration and social interaction, and they constructed nature-based meanings, even as they surrounded themselves with equipment and electronics that allowed them to spend very little time in close proximity to nature. Even campers in highly developed campgrounds who were somewhat isolated from nature by their motor homes said that they were experiencing nature.

Perceptions of nature were relative to the amount of nature that most people experienced on any given day while at home. Simply having immediate and direct access to forests and other nature-based setting features like a creek, a mountain, or birds created the conditions necessary for many campers to feel that they were in “wilderness” or in a “primitive” type of setting. Even the most obvious indicators of human presence, such as buildings, pavement, and the sounds of traffic could be overlooked because campers had the opportunity to walk down a trail to be surrounded in forests or to watch birds fly around their campsites. Thus, the participants in this study constructed what “nature” meant to them. Accordingly, these campers seemed to be escaping from one construction (i.e., their home environment) into another construction (i.e., their camping environment).

In 1969, Burch and Hendee noted that “the campfire was the crucial part of camping for most parties” (P. 15). This study supported the importance of campfires for developed forest camping. Building, watching, and tending to one’s campfire was one of the most salient activities across all three campground types. The campfire truly was, as Bachelard (1964) suggested, a “backwoods television.” Concurrent with Hendee and Campbell’s (1969) findings that developed forest campers spent a lot of time in social settings around their campfire, in this study the campfire was often the center of social interaction. As a male camper from camping group #9 in the moderately developed campground explained, “we gather most of the time here, there’s sometimes twenty or thirty of us that are around the campfire. We talk, we sing, we play cards, tell jokes, play some more cards.”

Developed Forest Camping as a Social-Based Experience

With regards to the social nature of developed forest camping, the results of this

study suggest that the modern developed forest camping experience has much in common with the developed forest camping experience of the 1960's and 1970's. In 1965, Burch reported that camping gains its meaning by being a part of the larger social world. Hendee and Campbell (1969) found that campers viewed camping "primarily as an opportunity to meet new people and to have an enjoyable social experience" (p. 14). Bultena and Klessig (1969) suggested that the appeal of camping was found in the opportunity that people had to meet "in a setting that affords an ease of social intercourse often unknown in the urban situation" (p. 350). Similarly, campers in this study identified social interaction as a salient element of developed forest camping and as an associated meaning of developed forest camping. For almost all campers the developed forest camping experience was a social experience, often defined according to whom one was camping with. Across the greater context of campers' lives, developed forest camping was meaningful through the sharing of memories and traditions which had evolved through social discourse and were often enacted through social rituals around the campfire. Thus, campers constructed camping as a social experience and social meanings were commonly associated with developed forest camping.

Family functioning was an important associated meaning of developed forest camping experiences for the campers in this study. These results support the results of recent qualitative studies of camping meanings (Patterson, Williams, & Scherl, 1994; Shaw, Havitz, & Delamere, 2002). Although some recreation researchers in the 1960s and 1970s suggested the importance of camping for family interaction (Burch, 1965; Gregerson, 1965; Hendee and Campbell, 1969), the idea that developed forest camping may actually improve a family's overall functioning, by providing the opportunity for

family members to spend more quality time together and thus enhancing communication, listening, and overall family bonding, seems more salient now than it was in the 1960's and 1970's. At the very least this element of developed camping was not written about in the journal articles and USDA Forest Service reports of that era. [With the notable exception of Hendee and Campbel (1969), who suggested that camping provided the opportunity for husbands and wives to spend time together as "children were expected to leave their parents and entertain themselves" (p. 14).] Cheek and Burch (1976) were perhaps the first camping researchers to note that "...behavior and meaning in the outdoors is linked less to the physical array than to the configuration of the group. The physical setting may be important to people, but it is important because it offers an arena for social interaction, reinforcement, and bonding" (p. 167).

Family functioning impacts of camping seemed to be an emergent (and occasionally unexpected) outcome of the developed forest camping experience at the MRNRA. Furthermore, campers shared that the long-term importance of camping in their lives was related to how camping had positively impacted their family, both in terms of immediate functioning but also in the creation of stories, memories, and traditions that led to increased family cohesiveness. These results are consistent with the work of Shaw, Havitz, and Delamere (2002), who found that "creating memories" was one of the most salient themes in their study of family *Avacation* (which included family camping). Shaw et al. found that memories were important because of the role of memories in the social construction of a positive view of the family and a shared understating of what family means. Thus, the creation of these forest camping memories and traditions actually has a role in the social construction of the family.

Another important question about the developed forest camping experience—in terms of family functioning meanings—is, “How important is the natural environment to the association of these meanings?” In other words, does a family vacation to Disneyland lead to the same family functioning meanings that were associated with developed forest camping in this study? If family functioning meanings can be associated with other experiences (as suggested by Shaw et al.), then what is the importance of the natural environment in USDA Forest Service campgrounds for enhancing family functioning.

It is also impossible to suggest from this study that family functioning is more likely to occur in nature-based settings than it is in other non-home environment settings such as would be available during a Disneyland vacation. However, the results do suggest that the developed forest camping setting may be important for family functioning because of its novelty, because it provides reduced access to stimuli that are distractions in home environments (such as televisions and telephones), and because it provides the opportunity for family members to participate in activities that might encourage closer contact and interaction. These novel situations often involve unexpected challenges that require family campers to work together in new, innovative ways in order to successfully solve problems. The family camping groups in this study suggested that by spending time in a reduced-stimulus environment provided by the developed forest camping setting, and participating in social experiences in which family members were able to focus on each other rather than being distracted by situations in their home environment, family members became closer to one another.

Attachment to Special Places

“Special places” was the second most commonly expressed meaning associated with developed forest camping. Campgrounds and campsites came to be viewed as special places because of family traditions and memories that were closely associated with them over time. According to many campers who participated in this study, traditions and stories related to the campgrounds as special places were almost always family-related and developed over a period of many years.

The ways in which campers developed traditions that were associated with MRNRA campgrounds supports Jacobi and Stokols’ (1983) concept of tradition. First, campers developed annual events and rituals (i.e., fishing, family meals, picking berries, etc.) that were replayed again and again each year that they camped at Mount Rogers. Second, these events and rituals were associated with groups of campers comprised of family members or friends and family. When viewed with expressions about social interaction, family functioning, restoration, and experiencing nature, campers’ comments suggest that the campgrounds in this study came to be associated with aesthetic beauty and with positive family experiences. Essentially, the campgrounds as special places came to symbolize important valued qualities like rest, enjoyment, nature, and family. The campgrounds as special places also came to represent meaningful family traditions like picking blueberries at a special place within the MRNRA. Thus, campers formed attachments to MRNRA campgrounds and wanted to share these aesthetic and symbolic qualities with other members of their families.

Comparing the Socio-Demographics of Developed Forest Campers

In the introduction it was suggested that the socio-demographics of the modern developed forest camper was changing, based upon data collected by Ken Cordell and his colleagues (1999). Cordell et al. reported that the “average” camper tended to be a retiree camping in an expensive motor home, a 16 to 45 year old single person traveling with friends and camping to reduce costs associated with lodging, or a person traveling in a group as a way of gaining access to other recreational opportunities such as climbing or canoeing (Cordell et al., 1999). The campers in this study did not match these socio-demographics. Generally speaking, the campers in this study tended to be married and camping with their spouse, children, grandchildren, or close friends. The majority of the campers were 30-39 years old (26%) or 40-49 years old (32%). These differences are likely due to the fact that Cordell and his colleagues’ socio-demographic findings were based on a population survey of both dispersed and developed campers. Furthermore, this study examined only developed camping in one setting.

The small sample in this study does not allow generalized statements about the socio-demographics of modern developed forest campers. However, the demographics of the participants in this study places this group of MRNRA developed forest campers in close similarity with the sample studied by Burch and Wenger in 1967—a set of camping groups in which the campers tended to be 30-44 year old married couples with 2-3 children, and the sample studied by Cordell and Sykes in 1969—a set of camping groups tended to be 40 year old married couples with 1-2 children.

It is important to note the ethnic homogeneity of the sample in this study. Almost all of the participants were White. As previously described, approximately forty percent

of the participants in this study reside in Southwestern Virginia. The ethnic characteristics of the participants in this study were consistent with ethnic characteristics of residents of Southwestern Virginia. The degree to which Whites are more likely to engage in developed camping has been documented by Cordell and his associates (1999), who found that Whites and other ethnic groups camped more frequently than African-Americans. In January 2004, The Recreation Roundtable reported that "White Americans participated in an average of 5.2 different outdoor recreation activities compared to 2.3 for African Americans and 3.5 for Hispanic Americans" (RoperASW, 2004, p. 8). The ethnic makeup of the participants in this study was believed to reflect regional characteristics and national outdoor recreation trends.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

Presented below are several specific insights and recommendations for the USDA Forest Service and for the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area management that were interpreted from conversations with the developed forest campers in this study.

1. Although nature-based experiences were possible in highly-developed campgrounds, some campers were not pleased with conditions associated with large campers and motor homes (i.e., noise pollution and a general sense of artificiality) found in the moderately and highly developed campgrounds. The most commonly associated meanings for campers from Ravens Cliff were “restoration” and the “opportunity for children to learn.” According to these campers’ responses, these meanings were dependent upon a more nature-based setting than was provided in developed campgrounds such as Hurricane and Grindstone. Therefore, MRNRA managers should continue to provide opportunities for camping in less developed campgrounds.
2. Campers in the Grindstone campground applauded the organized activities that were provided for their children. These activities were a focal point for social interaction and positive family experiences. Thus, there is support for the development and provision of organized programs and other opportunities for developed forest campers. These results were consistent with the findings of Cottrell and Cottrell (2003). In a study of family campers, they found that organized programs were important to family campers and that campers who participated in programs were more satisfied with the overall camping experience and with the value of the experience. Considering the “opportunity to teach

children” meanings that some campers associated with developed forest camping, and the importance that many parents in this study placed on their children having the opportunity to experience and create play in a natural setting, nature or environmental education programs—for parents and children—should be developed to facilitate this learning. Children should be given opportunities to create their own play (i.e., nature games, exploring, etc.) in developed forest campgrounds.

3. Developed forest campers desired comfort and conveniences. Comfort and convenience were most often associated with access to campsite amenities (i.e., water, electricity, hot showers, and clean bathrooms) and technologies (satellite reception, etc.). Today’s developed forest camper will continue to demand these types of amenities. Because the provision of these amenities will encourage continued camping participation, and thus the restorative functions that camping provides for many campers, these amenities should not be curtailed, as long as less developed camping opportunities are available.
4. Seeing water, listening to water, and water-focused activities (i.e., fishing, swimming, and exploring the creek) were particularly salient. Water-based natural resources located near developed forest campgrounds should be protected. Managers should consider how these resources can be enhanced to promote nature-based experiences and enjoyment.
5. Developed forest campers perceived many benefits with regards to family functioning and identified family functioning as an important meaning associated with developed forest camping experience. Some family members got along

better after a multi-day camping trip. Therefore, managers should promote the potential family functioning impacts of developed forest camping and should educate campers about these potential benefits. Because family functioning seemed to relate to the opportunity for families to participate in social-based experiences (i.e., organized programs, campfires, self-directed trails, etc.) *and* the opportunity to have some “down-time” which allowed families to spend unscheduled time together, managers should promote both types of opportunities.

6. New, unexpected experiences were meaningful to campers. In fact, these experiences contributed to the restoration and self-identity meanings that campers associated with developed forest camping. Managers should encouraged these types of experiences and explore how these types of experiences might be facilitated in and around developed forest campgrounds. For example, managers could provide campers with lists of unusual experiences or locales available within the MRNRA.
7. Developed forest campers, particularly those who had been camping at a particularly campground for multiple years, formed attachments to the Hurricane and Grindstone campgrounds as special places. They returned to these special places again and again, particularly with close friends or family members with whom they could share past memories and stories or carry on traditions. Managers should recognize the important place meanings and associated traditions that developed forest campers associated with developed forest camping. Furthermore, several developed forest campers who had been camping multiple years and who had developed emotional attachments to MRNRA

campgrounds had camped there as children. Research by Cottrell and Cottrell (2003) suggests that “participation in outdoor activities in youth carries over into adult leisure-time activities. The greater the involvement in a specific type of activity in adolescence, the more frequent the participation in the same type of activity at midlife.” (p. 37). Recurrent campers should be encouraged to return to the specific campgrounds to which they have formed attachments (e.g., reduced fees for multi-year campers, ensure that campground/campsite reservation systems do not discriminate local, long-time users, etc.). Managers should consider how group camping traditions can be facilitated. Campgrounds with a long history within the MRNRA should remain open. When existing low-use campgrounds are considered for closure, the public should be engaged in a dialogue about the meanings and importance of the campgrounds so that managers can make an informed decision, keeping in mind the importance of campers’ attachments to the campgrounds as special places.

8. Developed forest camping experiences were emergent, sometimes unexpected, and shared through stories. Sharing and hearing stories about their experiences were an important component of the social construction of meanings, particularly life-context meanings. Managers should encourage storytelling opportunities and behaviors through considerations for camp site construction, visitor interpretation, and organized programming. Campfires were often the center for social experiences in the campsites and were the catalyst for the expression and sharing of stories and even traditions. Managers should encourage campfires by providing fire pits or fire rings at each campsite and firewood to each camping

group upon arrival. Managers should ensure that additional firewood is easily available. Managers should designate forest plots where campers can gather firewood.

9. As judged by the participant response rate and campers comments, the experience of participating in the interviews was non-intrusive and generally a positive (rather than a negative) experience. Collecting on-site interview data was a successful method for collecting data on the topics of experiences and meanings. In addition, participants verbalized that they valued the opportunity to talk about the camping experiences at the MRNRA. They appreciated the fact that management was listening to what they felt was important about their camping experiences. Managers should consider additional ways that developed forest campers can be engaged in a dialogue about the experiences and the associated meanings of those experiences.
10. Developed forest campers from all three campgrounds in this study shared that they were pleased with the aesthetically pleasing, clean, safe campgrounds that were provided to them. Long-time campers shared that these campgrounds were not always as safe and that on-site hosts and managers had greatly improved the safety and overall condition of the campgrounds. Recognizing what is occurring in the greater context of American life, in terms of "war on terrorism" and Americans' perceptions of safe places, managers should ensure that this attention to detail is maintained.
11. The USDA Forest Service should recognize that campers desire a range of camping experiences from less-developed to highly-developed. Campers in this

study discussed how much they valued Raven Cliff, Hurricane, and Grindstone Campgrounds. Although the less developed campground- Raven Cliff- receives considerably less traffic more developed campgrounds, Raven Cliff is important for people who want a more primitive experience. For these campers, a more developed campground may not provide the type of camping experiences that is desired.

12. The Mount Rogers NRA Management and the Cradle of Forestry in America, should recognize the excellent work of the hosts and managers of Hurricane and Grindstone Campgrounds. With few exceptions, these hosts and managers were identified as contributing to a safe, positive forest camping experience.

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